When Cromwell came to Drogheda

A Memory of 1649

Randal McDonnell.

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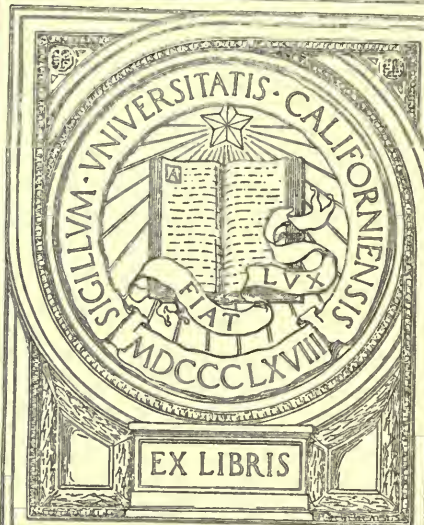

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WHEN CROMWELL CAME TO DROGHEDA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

How the Steam Engine Works
How to become a Locomotive Engineer
With the Queen to Killarney
The Tower of St. Michan's
The Perfect Rest
The Irish Squireens
Kathleen Mavourneen
Poor Molly Tressady

When Cromwell Came to Drogheda

A Memory of 1649

EDITED FROM THE RECORD OF CLARENCE STRANGER, A CAPTAIN IN THE ARMY OF OWEN ROE O'NEILL

BY

RANDAL McDONNELL

"Owen Roe, our own O'Neill,
He treads once more our land!
The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand."—

DE VERE.

"By suffering worn and weary,
But beautiful as some fair angel yet."

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When Cromwell came to Drogheda.

A MEMORY OF 1649.

CHAPTER I.

Which tells of my first great sorrow, and how a stranger came to my father's house in the dead of the night.

WHEN my father died at Galway in the year '41 he left me little but his own good name and the old sword which had served him well on many a hopeless field.

I remember well the day he died—one summer evening at the close of fair July when the good priest Father Latham called me in to hear his final message.

I knelt beside the bed and took the worn white hands within my own and my tears fell silently as he feebly blessed me and pointed to the sword upon the wall.

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"Wear it always," he whispered, "for Ireland. I have been hunted from my home and ruined for the sake of a false king. I have been tracked across the desolated land like a beast of prey, but I never swerved from the call of honour or changed sides like the others when they saw the game was lost. For Ireland I have fought a good fight, I have kept the Faith."

He died that evening, passing with the setting sun and leaving me alone in the world.

That night I took the old sword from the wall and kissed the rugged hilt, and prayed that I might wear it too as he had done, and leave behind me when the years had passed away as stainless and as sweet a name.

Two days afterwards the funeral took place and the coffin was conveyed to Tuam, for he had expressed a wish that he might rest in the old churchyard of Temple Jarlath where my mother had been buried some ten years before.

How well I remember that melancholy journey.

The rain was falling heavily as we left old Galway town, and as I looked back from that height from which so fair a view of sea and land is to be obtained on a summer's day I saw nothing but a leaden sky and angry ocean, and a fog-screened city.

We passed along the road to Tuam (God knows the worst road ever planned by man) until we reached Clare-Galway; and then after some twenty miles of desolation we touched Clare-Tuam, and then the old Cathedral city of St. Jarlath which nestles in a hollow of the land.

This is a town to be remembered not without pain by one who has lived as many years as I have in sunny Spain and among the vine-clad hills of France. Two small streets around the old Cathedral and the little churchyard and then away on every side long stretches of desolation.

After the funeral I stopped here for five whole days with my cousin, Rupert Gannon, at his house beside the Bridge.

I found these five days far too much.

Filled with the sorrow of my father's death I found myself unable to appreciate the charms of the country which my cousin set forth in such glowing language. On the first day I had felt in all conscience sad enough, but on the last day my gloom had so increased that I felt a strong desire to wander to the top of Knockma and turning my gaze from Tuam towards Croagh-Patrick to die without further pain.*

* For a modern account of Tuam after a lapse of nearly three centuries there would appear to be no immediate necessity for re-editing Captain Stranger's melancholy description.

It was therefore with a sense of deep relief that I left the town and turned my steps towards Galway.

But it must be confessed that if the town of Tuam is not one of the beauty spots in a land of beauty, it is at least redeemed by sweet and holy memories.

Here on this sacred spot once walked the holy Jarlath whose name and memory live to-day enshrined in faithful hearts.

A few short miles away lie the ruins of Cluainfois, that mighty school of learning which he founded and among whose names are written those of Cuthbert, St. Colman, and the gentle Brendan.

Hard by Cluainfois is the churchyard and Round Tower of Kilbannon where the good Benin taught a future race of saints, the forerunners of that faithful band who at the risk of life and limb still minister the consolations of the old religion, and soothe the horrors of the grave and draw the sting from Death.

It was late on that day when I reached my home in Galway now only occupied by Father Latham and by me.

Our house was situated on the rising ground

above Salt Hill, and only distant a few hundred yards from the sea. How often has the inexpressible sadness of the moaning waves soothed my tired eyes to slumber or awakened the spirit of restless longing when I paced the sandy shore —the longing for an opportunity to follow in my father's steps.

This house and a small plot of land beside it was all that had been left to our family after the recent confiscations, for we had once possessed broad lands in the County of Roscommon, but that scoundrel, Wentworth, had carried out his work with ardour and an English family had been "planted" on the old ancestral home.

One evening Father Latham came in to bid me a hurried good-bye.

"I am off to join Mr. O'Moore," he said, "and to aid as far as I can the cause of Ireland."

I little knew at that time that he alluded to the Rising of '41 which broke out a short while afterwards and was waged with a terrible ferocity by both combatants—the Irish Catholics on one side and the English Planters on the other.

Those were lonely days that followed his departure. I used to spend them in reading the books that were grouped in our dusty library or

by wandering along the quays and watching with interest the ships of different styles that came from Spain and France; for our commerce with those countries was still considerable although England had done her best to ruin and destroy it.

The monotony of my home life was often broken by a visit from my distant relatives, the Brandons, who drove in from Oranmore, for my cousin Shiela was nearly always with them, and when she came the world for me seemed brighter and the shadows of my recent sorrow faded in the sunshine of her presence.

A lovely girl she was in those well remembered days—cold like ice to strangers but very sweet and very gentle to those whom she knew and loved.

One day she fixed her dark eyes on me and looked me over with some contempt.

"What are you staring at, cousin?" said I.

"I was thinking that it was time you stopped this fooling and set about doing something in the world," she cried.

For shame I could make her no reply.

"Is there nothing to be done for this poor land," she went on angrily, "no fight to be won for the old Religion?"

At this I could stand her no longer and I fairly broke down. It was foolish enough I grant you, but you must remember that I was little more than a boy at that time, and though my cousin was of the same age she treated me like a sixteenth younger brother. Besides all this I had come to love her deeply even then, and she was perfectly aware of it.

"You talk of the old Religion," I cried in a broken voice, "but what does *your* religion teach you?"

The frown faded from her face and the dark eyes lit up with the old gentle smile.

"Surely it tells us to love one another," she answered softly and with a fine air of innocence. "Oh, forgive me, cousin, for my seeming harshness, but I want you to do something worthy of our name!"

If she had only understood then as she understood afterwards how entirely such a longing had already taken possession of my heart.

The year '41 with its terrible memories now passed away and it was not until July, '42, that Father Latham returned to me at last.

He came in as I was sitting in the lonely parlour reading my favourite book—Edmund Spenser's

"Faerie Queen"—and taking my hand in his strong firm clasp he gave me a hearty greeting.

"There will be more stirring times in Ireland soon," he said, "and a great blow is about to be struck for the old Faith and for the lost freedom. Your chance of carrying out your father's will may come sooner than you expect, for I have received news that a great Leader will soon land secretly on the coast of Donegal, and I expect a messenger from him to-night with dispatches. Shall I tell you more?"

I took his hand in mine, this faithful friend of our fallen fortunes, this good brave man who had risked so much for his religion and was willing to yield his life.

"Tell me everything," I cried, "tell me that my father's dream is about to be realised, and tell me the part that I may bear for the honour of our name."

"You speak too quickly," he answered gently, "you must be discreet as well as brave and wait in patience for your part in the great approaching drama."

"This is essentially a Catholic movement," Father Latham went on, "but nevertheless Irishmen of all creeds are welcomed to our ranks

if they are willing to combine with us against the common foe. A united Ireland was your father's dream, and when we were together in Spain some five years ago waiting upon Colonel O'Neill he wrote some lines on the same subject that stick in my memory still. They sounded like a trumpet call to Ireland," he added wistfully, "God grant that they may some day be fulfilled," and he repeated the following lines in his clear unfaltering voice :—

"*Comrades, who the vigil keeping*
Watch and tend the sacred fire,
Though the land we love lies weeping
Plundered of her heart's desire.
Through the darkness thickly falling
Gleams the dawning silver light,
Hark! the sound of trumpet calling
Rouse you, gird you for the fight;
Hear the music, mark the token
When upon our ranks unbroken
Shall a shaft of glory shine—
You and I, and all the others—
Different creeds—and yet as brothers
Marching to a song divine!"

He stopped speaking, and we both looked out

over the Bay where a great full moon threw her silver light over the waters.

Suddenly Father Latham rose from his chair and looked towards the moon-lit sea.

"Hush! can you hear anything?" he said.

I listened intently.

Far away in the dim distance came the sound of muffled oars, and the creaking of the oars in the row-locks was borne clearly on my ear.

"My God," I cried, "can this be the messenger from O'Moore?"

He pushed me back gently into the chair from which I had arisen.

"Not from O'Moore," he said, in a tone of triumph, while his eyes lit up with a peculiar brightness, "not from O'Moore, for the Leader I spoke of is a far greater man. This is an Irish soldier fresh from the battle-fields of Spain, whose name has rung through Europe. This is the last hope of Ireland in whom she puts her trust—in the Defender of Arras—in Owen Roe O'Neill!"

CHAPTER II.

How I first saw the messenger from Owen Roe O'Neill, and how I set out with dispatches for his kinsman, Sir Phelim, and Mr. O'Moore.

THE figure of a man advanced slowly in the moonlight up the winding avenue, and his shadow fell on the grassy slopes near the entrance to the hall door.

Then we both went out of the parlour to greet him on the threshold, and as he advanced and shook hands with Father Latham I saw that he was dressed in the uniform of a Spanish officer.

"The Captain has not landed after all," he said, in answer to Father Latham's enquiry. "We heard that Monroe has spies in Galway and thought it safer to take no risk. I have been sent to bring you on board to him for a consultation of the utmost importance. The vessel is lying one mile off Barna and there is not a moment to be lost."

Father Latham saw the look of disappointment in my face, and said in answer, "I will be

ready in five minutes, and you must let me take my young friend with us as I have important reasons for introducing him to the Captain."

The officer raised no objection and we all set out together.

That voyage was delicious over the quiet moon-lit sea, and my spirits rose when the dark hull of the vessel loomed in the distance.

After boarding her Father Latham went down into the Captain's cabin while I remained upon the deck, and it was not until half an hour had passed that a Spanish sailor came to conduct me into his presence. He was talking eagerly to Father Latham when I entered and the small swinging lamp which was attached to the ceiling lit up his handsome face. As I advanced into the cabin Father Latham introduced him as Captain O'Farrell, and after his cordial greeting I was soon perfectly at my ease.

"I knew your father in Spain," he said, "and the good Father here has told me your story. You seem young to be a soldier but you have a comely bearing, and can ride and shoot and use the broad-sword well. I have arranged with Father Latham to give you your first commission, which is to bring important dispatches

to Colonel Phelim O'Neill and Mr. O'Moore at Enniskillen," and he unlocked a small drawer and handed me a sealed packet, giving me at the same time some careful instructions. As I was thanking him the captain of the vessel came down to tell us that the tide had turned, and that the ship must sail at once.

We bid Captain O'Farrell a hearty farewell, and as he held my hand he said—"Young man, if you should prove yourself a faithful messenger for the cause, you may rely upon it that O'Neill will not forget."

How my heart beat at those words, and it was with a glow of pride that I mounted to the deck with the precious dispatches buttoned into the pocket of my coat.

Father Latham's pride was only equalled by my own, and as we rowed home he praised the General's nobleness of character in glowing language, and he told me that his ship had already started from Dunkirk, and sailing round the north of Scotland would soon reach the coast of Donegal.

As we landed near the house three figures came suddenly round the bend of the road from Barna and passed by us going towards the city.

When we had gone on a few yards Father Latham suddenly turned his head in their direction.

"Oh, I thought so," he muttered angrily, "they are watching us."

Neither of us spoke again but passed quietly into the house.

That night it was arranged that I was to set out on my mission on the following evening.

In the early morning, after a few hours rest, I saddled my horse and rode over to Oranmore, but only to receive a keen disappointment, for I found that my cousin, Shiela, had left three days before on a visit to her uncle, at the old castle of Dardistown in the County of Meath, some few miles from Drogheda.

That evening after sunset, armed with my sword and double pistols, I led my horse round to the hall-door where Father Latham was waiting to bid me farewell.

"Be faithful to the cause," he said, "dare all except dishonour. May the good God watch over you, my boy, and grant that you may live to do good work for O'Neill and for Ireland."

Then he gave me his solemn blessing and I set out upon my journey towards the city

CHAPTER III.

Which tells of a ride for life, and how fate outwitted the spies of General Monroe.

THE night shadows were falling as I entered the walled city through one of the southern gates.

As I passed through the market street at the back of St. Nicholas' Church I glanced at the old house of James Lynch Fitzstephen, a former warden of Galway, who more than a hundred years before had hung his own son for crime. An action truly laudable, showing how an overwhelming sense of justice could stifle all decent parental feeling.

In the fading light I could just catch the faint inscription beneath a skull and cross-bones on the wall:—

1524.

REMEMBER DEATH VANITI OF VANITI
AND ALL IS BUT VANITI.

And the quaint inscription gave me food for solemn thoughts as I pondered on Father Latham's words.

Thus musing I rode to the northern entrance of the town and passed out towards the Tuam road.

The bells of St. Nicholas were tolling solemnly as I turned and looked back at the frowning walls and the towers of the city gates. Then I crossed myself and rode on into the increasing darkness.

I had ridden for about four miles at a good sound trot and was walking up a slight hill near Clare-Galway, when a sudden sense of danger fell upon me and I stopped to listen.

Faint and far away came the sound of galloping horses, and through the clear warm July evening I could distinctly hear the tapping of many hoofs. Then I remembered what Captain O'Farrell had said about Monroe and his covenanting spies, and determined to be on the safe side of my suspicions I broke into a hard gallop.

My horse was running finely and the oppressive sense of danger was fading from my breast when I reached Clare-Galway and passed over the bridge. I was almost opposite the massive square tower of the old castle which had been garrisoned by the Marquis of Clanricarde during the recent rising of '41, and which lies on the

right of the road, and I thought I could just catch a glimpse of the tower of the Franciscan Monastery on my left looming through the darkness, when suddenly from one of the central loop-holes I heard a harsh voice cry out—"Halt! in the King's name, or with the help of God I'll put a bullet through your head," and I saw a musket barrel gleam from the tower.

A pleasant greeting truly for a hunted man! For as it turned out afterwards the horsemen behind me were three of Monroe's spies who had been watching for the arrival of O'Farrell's ship, and who having tracked Father Latham and me on the night of our visit had drawn their own conclusions with a remarkable correctness.

Here, then, I was with my horse drawn up upon the bridge and the three soldiers of the Parliamentarians drawing nearer and nearer, while an enthusiastic soldier of King Charles wished to end my further progress in this world with an ounce of lead.

But as I belonged to neither the King's party nor to the Puritans I had but little intention if I could help it of being either caught or killed, and so striking spurs into my horse I dashed forward past the castle, and as I came under the

loop-hole of the tower I flung myself forward on my horse's neck.

As I passed a musket shot rang out in the night air and a bullet buried itself in the further side of the road.

Once more I breathed freely and sped on through the darkness.

Soon I passed Laghtgeorge and took the Tuam road.

Thundering on behind me came the three pursuers, but after I had covered some six miles more I could hear the sound of pursuit growing fainter, and I might indeed have outridden them altogether when unfortunately my horse fell lame and in spite of all my efforts of encouragement the pace fell woefully off.

When about one mile from the cross-road which leads to Tuam or to Headford I could again hear them coming up on me hand over hand.

The immortal hope that was burning in my breast seemed suddenly quenched, and I had given myself up for lost when the hand of fate intervened and in a moment changed the entire situation.

Approaching the crossing my horse stumbled and fell on his knees and shot me like an arrow

from a bow into a deep damp ditch by the side of the road. Then recovering himself and stung by the pain of his bleeding limbs he galloped furiously away round the bend of the Headford road and was well on his way towards Castle-Hackett when my pursuers dashed by me in the darkness.

I could see the foam on the bridles and the smoking flanks; I could hear the rattle of the swords and the straining of the girths as they passed me on the full gallop leaving a cloud of dust behind them, and choking the sweet night air.

When the sound of hoofs had died away and the blessed silence of a summer's night reigned once more on all around, I raised myself from the miry ditch and taking the turning towards Tuam I ran with all the strength that my tired limbs permitted, constantly pausing to listen in terror and hearing imaginary sounds of pursuit in the unbroken stillness of the night. Twice I felt like fainting with weariness but managed to struggle on, and some three-quarters of an hour afterwards I was knocking loudly at my cousin's house at the bridge—faint and weary and foot-sore, but very thankful!

CHAPTER IV.

How I stopped in the city of Refuge, and how cousin Rupert showed me the secret of the King.

MY cousin Rupert opened the door, for the old servant, Bridget, had long ago retired to rest, and he stared in amazement at my dishevelled appearance.

"I thought you had had enough of Tuam," he said.

"I have had enough of the Galway road and the Galway ditches," I answered, "and have chosen the lesser of two evils."

Then he led me into the well lighted parlour where he had been reading, surrounded by his favourite books; and then I told him all.

"And where was your mission to?" he asked.

I blushed deeply and held up my hand, for my cousin was one of the Catholic Royalists and had no great love for the O'Neills.

"Promise not to ask any questions," I said, "it must be sufficient for you to know that my mission is one of honour in a righteous cause."

"It is sufficient," he answered, "my lips are sealed."

My cousin, as I have said, was a member of the Royalist Catholic party in Ireland and was as infatuated a follower of the Stuarts as the most ardent Cavalier in England could have desired.

He would have sold his house and small belongings to have assisted in that cause, and would have been rewarded with the same measure of treachery and lies which seem to have been the chief inheritance of the Stuart Race.

The life of the first Charles, whose throne was tottering day by day, was dark with broken vows; while his son, who afterwards at the Restoration had the most glorious opportunity ever offered to a King, sold his country's honour for the gold of foreign kings or to gratify the whims of foreign mistresses.

Nothing, I think, could have shaken my cousin's loyalty or his faith in England—not even the book which I now saw lying open on his table—Spenser's "View of the State of Ireland."

And then, as final proof of what I have written, on the wall near the window side of the fireplace

was a full length portrait of Charles I.—a copy, and a very bad one I think, of that picture of a kingly face which Van-Dyck has made immortal.

My cousin soon went out and brought in some supper—a chicken pasty and some wine—which I treated with that justice which was due from one who had youth and health and some twenty miles of horse and pedestrian exercise to tempt his appetite.

I watched my cousin while I ate, and knew that he was thinking deeply. When I was finished he rose up and went to the side of the fireplace, and I saw him push something on the wall.

To my utter astonishment the entire portrait of the King slid sideways and disclosed a flight of wooden steps leading underground.

"Why did you never tell me of that before?" I said.

"I only show that secret," he answered, "to those whose lives I value—when they are in danger."

"What danger?" I said scornfully, for the good wine, I think, had made me mighty brave.

"You young fool," my cousin said, "do you think that the class of men who are hunting you

will be so easily avoided. They will overtake your horse finally and find out their mistake; they will then retrace you here and will enquire for your relations or your friends."

"And who will tell them?" I said.

"Dear God," he cried, "you speak like a child. How long do you think will they take to find out all about you in a town where everybody knows more about everybody else's business than they do about their own?"

At this I felt myself growing distinctly feeble—the wine and the valour were beginning to wane.

"Is it that sort of a town?" I said.

"It is," he cried, "and more. Oh it's a place to be proud of—this Galway Paradise, and peopled with the angels! Firstly, there are the few Protestant upstarts who infest the place, and who gravely labour under the delusion that they were born gentlemen; whose purity of life is beyond approach—not reproach. But it takes a good many generations to make a gentleman, and an overflow of wealth may gild an upstart, but sure it cannot refine him. Then there are the numerous Catholics who tamely gather round these pillars of the Protestant faith in admiration, instead of rising up and crushing out the

low-born adventurers. Sure this is enough to make an honest man feel sick in his inside. Then lastly comes his Grace—who being a man of common sense keeps circling round his Diocese—for the oftener round your Diocese the longer out of Tuam. A week ago when he returned they had a banquet in his honour, and to judge by the grandeur of the talk one might suppose that they mistook their mud village for the centre of Catholic Christendom. And all this, mind you, in a place that is scarce marked upon the map. But enough of this," my cousin cried, "I shall ride off now to Captain Anderson at Dunmore who has a party of the King's men with him, and they may make a great catch yet. But you had better keep clear of both parties," he added, "or the King's men may prove as inquisitive as the Covenanters."

He then showed me the working of the secret door which was simplicity itself. By pressing the hidden knob at the fireplace the catch was released and the door slid back by means of a weight. It was then drawn to by hand, and could be re-opened on the farther side by means of a similar knob.

Then he showed me a slit in one side of the picture where a watch could be kept on what was taking place in the room.

"It did good service last year," cousin Rupert said, "for it saved Father O'Rourke's life when he was being hunted to certain death. The secret passage runs under the bed of the river and on for some four hundred yards, emerging at last in an old disused well* only a short distance from the Dunmore Road."

My cousin then rose to leave the room.

"A toast," he cried, "before I go."

"A toast to whom?" I said.

"To the King," he cried.

"Oh, cousin, spare me that," I said, "it makes me sick, the name of Charles of England. Ask the Archbishop of Tuam and see what De-Burgo thinks. Ask Burke, of Castle-Hackett, or, better still, Clanricarde—for if ever a man was staunch and true Clanricarde was, and yet he knows that after all this blood and suffering this King of yours would cast him off like a shrunken rind on the day he had sucked him

* From a rough sketch on the side of the Stranger MSS. the disused well was evidently situated on the rising corner of the Palace demesne, next the Dunmore Road.

dry; or if needs be would have him decoyed across the Channel to make that last lonely journey towards Tower Hill. Has the Rising of '41 taught you nothing? Will nothing prove to you that these English robbers are bent on the extermination of our race—the blotting out of the old religion. Yet look at Ireland now and what do you find? The Catholic party stands divided—one-half is flirting with His Holiness the Pope and the King of France, the other half is gazing on His Majesty of England. One half looks southwards where the help can never come, the other eastwards for the old promises, for the broken pledges, for the ancient lies! Oh, Rupert will you never understand?"

The stern, intellectual face lit up angrily.

"You have said enough," he cried, "my God, you have said too much;" and he turned like a beast at bay and left the room.

I knew, however, that his anger would soon cool, and it was not long before I heard him giving Bridget orders that if anyone called during his absence she was to give an evasive answer, and after that he passed the window on horseback and waved his hand to me. Then

I heard him cantering up the rising ground which leads to the Dunmore Road.

It was now one hour past midnight, and I threw myself back in the covered armchair by the fire to rest myself until my cousin's return.

I could not, however, resist the drowsiness which fell upon me, and in spite of a few feeble efforts to conquer the inclination I was soon in the land of dreams.

I slept for about an hour, and then suddenly awoke and sat bolt upright in my chair, and it did not take long I can tell you to shake off all the effects of slumber, for through the open parlour window, clear and hard, and terrible to me, came the sound of horsemen riding down the street. I gathered up my hat and cloak from a neighbouring chair, blew out the lamp, and muttering "with your Majesty's permission," I pressed the knob of the secret panel, when the portrait of the King slid slowly backwards and I stepped into the secret passage.

CHAPTER V.

How capture and death passed by me and fell upon the spies of General Monroe.

A FEW seconds after the horsemen wheeled up outside the house, and after some conversation, I heard them knocking loudly with their sword hilts against the hall door.

Bridget, the servant, aroused from her slumbers, after a while opened the door with considerable indignation, but at the same time took in the situation, as was her wont, in a single glance.

"The master might be in or he might not," she said in answer to the loud enquiries; "the divil only knows, for master Rupert's always wanderin'." The three men pushed her aside and began a thorough search through the house.

Soon they came down disappointed into the parlour and ordered some supper as though the place belonged to them.

The remnants of my meal on the table puzzled

them, but they came to the conclusion that my cousin must have been banqueting before his departure; for all their cross-questioning could draw nothing out of Bridget who was attentive to their wants, polite beyond her usual condition, and perfectly unfathomable.

They had eaten and drunk heavily, and my body was growing weary from my cramped position behind the secret panel, when the door was quietly opened and my cousin stood before them.

The three men started to their feet and drew their swords.

"It will be useless, gentlemen," my cousin said, "there will be no defence," and he pointed to the open window.

To my intense surprise I saw three musket barrels resting on the sash, and behind them in the shadow I could discern faintly a group of soldiers, while at that moment Captain Anderson from Dunmore entered behind my cousin, and was soon followed by half a dozen more.

"It would, indeed, be hopeless to resist," he said, advancing towards the tallest of the three spies. "You are surrounded upon every side

of the house, and are caught, gentlemen, like rats in a trap; so be good enough to give me your swords and surrender in the King's name."

They saw, of course, that the game was up, but yielded, I thought, rather tamely.

For my own part I think they might have had a chance of escape had they charged the soldiers at the open window and tried to cut their way through. There were horses, too, outside, and fortune, as we all know, favours the brave and daring.

They must have imagined, I think, that Captain Anderson would have treated them as ordinary soldiers of the Parliamentarian forces in Ireland, and that he could have had no idea of their real calling. If so, they must have had a rude awaking, for when searched by the soldiers in charge fatal documents were found upon one of them and they were condemned to be shot at sunrise.

It seemed a cruel thing to me, who was as yet unused to the rapid military law which gives the spy but a brief period of mercy, as they were led away with a file of soldiers on either side and conducted to a temporary barrack at the end of the street

When the house was empty and Captain Anderson had set out on his return to Dunmore, my cousin came back to the parlour and knocked three times on the panel which I took for a signal that all was clear, and came forth from my hiding place.

"You are all right now," he said, smiling, "whatever other adventures fortune may have in store for you these men at least will never hurt you more."

"It seems terrible," I said, "that they must die so soon and with so little preparation."

His face hardened as he answered.

"It is enough," said he, "that they were spies and enemies of our King."

I was about to reply, "of *your* King," but had received a sufficient dose of his bad temper before on this subject and was wise enough to hold my tongue. I thanked him, therefore, very heartily for his kind actions in saving my life, and retired at his request to his own bedroom to get some few hours rest before continuing my journey to the north.

I had slept soundly for some two hours, and had been dreaming of Shiela and home and

Galway, when the rattle of a musket volley awoke me from my happy slumber.

I got up and went to the window. It was the hour when the world around us always seems to me most beautiful—when the dewy-coated fields and lanes are bathed by the risen sun, and the birds sing their happy songs of welcome to the newly-awakened day; but away to my right in the back yard of a deserted house I saw where death had cast her shadows on the rapture of the scene.

A group of soldiers were carefully cleaning their muskets and laughing coarsely among themselves, while lying huddled together at the foot of a back wall some ten paces away I saw the bodies of three men.

The spies of General Monroe had passed into eternity.

CHAPTER VI.

How I delivered the despatches in safety to Sir Phelim O'Neill, and how I first met Owen Roe.

IT was far past noon on that eventful day when I bid my cousin good-bye, and took the Claremorris Road to the north, and it was with a glad heart that I left Tuam and its memories behind me, and rode eagerly onwards to complete my mission for O'Neill.

The memory of that ride comes back to me clearly although the years are many that have passed me by since then, and few would recognise in the wrinkled grey-haired man the happy youth whose heart was glowing with the love of fatherland and whose mind was weaving pictures of future glory under the banner of O'Neill.

It was a good thing to leave the ugly country around Tuam and to pass into the improved scenery of Claremorris. From that point onwards the country grew at every step more pleasing to the eye, and when very late that

evening I reached the County Sligo, God knows I would ask for nothing sweeter than the land which lay around me.

That night I slept at a cottage some ten miles from Collooney, and on the following morning I passed through this lovely district and struck north-east for Enniskillen.

On reaching Enniskillen I heard that Sir Phelim O'Neill had retreated to a place called Glasslough in the County of Monaghan, and had there summoned together all his downcast followers for a consultation as to the advisability of ending the Rebellion on account of the deplorable misfortunes into which his leadership had been the means of leading them.

Upon reaching Glasslough on the following day I found them on the point of breaking up and departing to their several homes, when my despatches announced to them the glorious news of Owen's arrival in a few days off Donegal. Then all was suddenly changed, and where despair had reigned supreme there now sprang up new hopes of future glory for the shattered land of Erin.

A few days afterwards a messenger arrived from Owen himself announcing his safe arrival

at Doo Castle on the coast of Donegal with a good supply of arms and ammunition for the war.

On the following day we left Glasslough and met our great Captain at Charlemont where the other chiefs of Ulster also assembled to do him honour. Sir Phelim presented me to him in person, and he spoke a few kind words of encouragement to me and thanked me for my successful mission.

"When you are drilled and properly instructed," he said kindly, "I shall give you your commission and have you attached to my bodyguard."

Overcome at such a prospect, I thanked him awkwardly and withdrew.

I can see him now in my imagination—that lofty brow and strong-bearded face, with the sharp straight nose and large dark eyes which could pierce you with angry scorn or grow tender like a woman's when he smiled.

It was not until many years afterwards that I came across that portrait of him in Flanders, painted by Van Brugens, but it seemed to me to give but a faint resemblance of the martial grandeur of the man.

Immediately on his appointment as Commander of the Ulster Forces O'Neill took up the reformation of what was simply a rabble. He saw at a glance that it would be utterly useless to lead such men against the trained warriors of Coote and of Monroe, but he knew that with proper drilling and decent discipline imposed they would make some of the finest soldiers in the world.

The months following his arrival, therefore, were devoted to this purpose, and the success which attended his efforts will be shown to you later on. In the meantime let me turn from the drilling grounds of Ulster and tell you of the different men and the different parties in Ireland now striving for supremacy in those stirring days.

CHAPTER VII.

Which contains a little history showing the state of the different parties in Ireland on the arrival of Owen Roe.

IT was towards the close of July, 1642, that Owen Roe O'Neill had landed in Ireland, and it was just one month later when war was declared between Charles I. and his Parliament.

To understand my memoir properly you must understand the state of Ireland at this time. There were four great parties in the country. In the first instance there was the party of the old Irish, whose members had been so hopelessly oppressed by the English when the Plantations took place and whose Catholic religion had been so insulted that their hopes were founded on an entire separation from England. The leader of this party was our gallant general, Owen Roe.

The next party was composed of the old Anglo-Irish Catholics, who also suffered for their

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religion and were affected also in a small degree by the Plantations. They were, however, loyal to the English connection and only looked for civil and religious liberty. Their leader was Colonel Preston, who was brother to Lord Gormanstown.

Thirdly comes the party of the Puritans, in which was included the Presbyterians and the Scots of Ulster, and the leader of this party was General Monroe, who worked in conjunction with the Covenanters of Scotland and the Parliament of England against King Charles. This party was, therefore, the especial opponent of the old Irish party—firstly, because of their Catholic religion, and secondly, because of their national aims which, should they prove successful, would mean the driving back of the Scotch into Scotland or else into the Irish sea.

Lastly came the Royalist party who were in possession of the city of Dublin. The men composing this party were chiefly of the Protestant religion, and acting with that peculiar sense of honour which has always characterised the Protestants of Ireland they endeavoured to prove to the King that the Catholic Anglo-Irish party (which was perfectly loyal) ought to be branded as a pack of rebels.

This, then, was the condition of the various parties in Ireland when Owen Roe first planted his banner on the Irish shore.

But to return to my own adventures.

On the day when I received my commission from the General I also received the joyful news that Father Latham had returned from business in the south and had been searching the camp for me.

CHAPTER VIII.

How Father Latham told me of Sir Phelim's failure in the attempt to take Drogheda.

LATE that night when the camp was silent in sleep Father Latham and I met at the little hillock which overlooked the plain and told our several adventures since we parted in Galway.

"I noticed," said I, "that you kept aloof from the officers when they met together, and am I right in thinking that you shunned Sir Phelim O'Neill purposely?"

"You are," he cried angrily, "and had ever a man a better cause. You remember how I left Galway after your father's death to help in the Ulster Rising. It was O'Moore who started it, but it was Sir Phelim who had the winning or losing of a great cause; and if ever a great cause was ruined by bad generalship—behold the man!

"I was with him at the commencement of the campaign, and I was with him when he lost the famous fight round Drogheda, when he lost the

grandest victory God ever put within a soldier's grasp. Drogheda was of the utmost importance to us. It meant the breaking up of all communication between Dublin and the North, and it meant an ideal camping place from which to pour our men for the attack on Dublin. But *he* was there, that man who bears the same name as Owen Roe, but how different in all else. The same blood, but without the fire, without the genius, without the sense of military glory that burns in our great Captain's heart. One word from Owen Roe acts like a trumpet call, and I have seen on many a Spanish field tired men spring up with renewed strength at the sound of that martial voice, and only rest again when Death had touched them into everlasting silence.

"But when this man commands, our men of war grow cold, and only prophecy disaster; and well they may as you shall hear.

"It was in the beginning of November that Sir Phelim led his combined forces against Drogheda. Although he knew for certain that messengers would be sent to Dublin for aid when his approach was known, yet he made no effort to send scouts on in front to intercept

them, with the result that Lord Moore escaped to Dublin and fully alarmed that city.

"The Lord Justices and the Council of Dublin now sent up Sir Henry Tichburne with one thousand foot and one hundred horse who safely entered Drogheda, and this commander immediately set about improving the fortifications of the place, strengthening with peculiar care the Mill-Mount, which is a great stronghold on the Meath side.

"In the meantime Sir Phelim was dallying and undecided round the town. On the 23rd of November we won a considerable success.

"On the day before six hundred more foot and fifty horse had been despatched as further reinforcements from Dublin, and they only reached Swords that night where they mutinied. Sir Henry Tichburne, however, had sent out a force to meet them, and after some delay they combined and marched to Drogheda. Under cover of a dense fog a portion of our army advanced upon them and met them face to face at the Bridge of Julianstown. With a roar like the angry ocean our men rushed in upon them. For some minutes they fought bravely enough, then suddenly broke and fled while our

men pursued them for miles along the banks of the Nanny water. Our triumph was complete, and had the rest of the siege been undertaken in this spirit the whole face of our campaign and perhaps the history of Ireland might have been changed.

"Sir Phelim now surrounded Drogheda closely, and the sentinels were as thick as flies to prevent anyone approaching or leaving the town.

"Meanwhile Sir Henry Tichburne was not idle, I could see his men working day and night increasing the strength of the walls and gates; placing breast-works before each gate and erecting platforms where the walls were most defective. Those powerful weapons of war called Morning Stars were fixed upon the ramparts and a world of crescents threw their bright light across the town when the night was specially dark. They also threw an iron chain across the river, and tried to bring in all the corn they could obtain outside the walls. But Sir Phelim now awoke for awhile from his lethargy and put a stop to this.

"He was now quartered with his bodyguard at a place called Bewly, and had placed detachments at the villages of Bettystown, Mornington,

Oldbridge, Tullyallen and Ballymakenny, and also in the Castle of Rathmullen.

"The garrison in Drogheda were suffering badly from dearth of food, and on the 3rd of December some three hundred and fifty foot and two troops of horse sallied out with great gallantry from St. Lawrence's Gate and catching our men totally unprepared defeated them badly, killing, I think, near two hundred of them before returning to the town with several cars full of corn from the adjacent townland of Greenhills.

"On the night of St. Thomas's eve, the 20th December, Sir Phelim ordered a grand assault to be made, but this, like all his other movements, proved a grand failure.

"The fiercest attack was directed against St. John's Gate, as our spies had brought us information that this had been but indifferently fortified, but our men here met with a bloody resistance and were hurled back in hundreds, dead and dying from the ramparts. After this defeat it was decided to reduce the town by starvation, for a number of the garrison who had leaped over the walls and had escaped in order to avoid the chances of starvation had informed us that disease was already making

itself felt owing to a constant diet of salt herrings. Towards the close of December the Boyne was frozen across and this enabled us to move our men from either side of the river without any risk.

"On the 11th of January a number of vessels arrived at the mouth of the Boyne filled with provisions and ammunition forwarded from Dublin for the garrison.

"Sir Phelim now ordered a vessel to be sunk at the entrance of the river and caused a chain to be stretched across in order to block the passage, but his efforts were again in vain for the enemy's ships broke through and sailed up the river to the beleaguered town.

"During their natural rejoicings at this good fortune we effected an entrance through an old blind door of an orchard between St. James's Gate and the water. Some five hundred men got inside and, as far as I could see, never got out again.

"Had they been properly led, and had they advanced direct to the Mill-Mount, the artillery there could have been turned on the besieged, and then, I think, Sir Henry Tichburne's day had been well nigh over. But the good God had ordered it otherwise.

"After this affair Sir Phelim set out for the North to collect more men, and returning soon after he made another attempt to take the town.

"Being again repulsed with heavy loss, and having done sufficient harm to his own cause to give him proper pause, he never again attempted the assault."

CHAPTER IX.

How our great Captain marched against Monroe, with an account of the glorious victory at Benburb.

FROM the summer of 1642 events moved slowly. The party composed of the old Anglo-Irish had established a government of their own in the Marble City, which was known by the name of the Confederation of Kilkenny. It was established in October, 1642, and was composed of eleven spiritual and fourteen temporal peers, together with two hundred and twenty-six commoners. It was regarded by our party in the North with considerable contempt on account of the vile jealousy that it displayed in all transactions with O'Neill. The policy of our General was a policy of war. He desired that all Ireland should unite as one body and drive the English from the land.

The policy of the Confederation of Kilkenny was a policy of peace. The Confederates acted on no definite lines, but fought among themselves

and intrigued with the English, wasting many golden opportunities in useless talk instead of uniting in rapid action with O'Neill and the other leaders. Meanwhile the weary years rolled by, and it was at the close of 1644, I remember, that I stopped with the Brandons at Oranmore.

One afternoon in the late November I walked with Shiela by the shores of Galway Bay and told her the story of my love and hopes.

"I knew it always, cousin," Shiela said, as I stooped to kiss her, and to take her hands in mine.

So we were betrothed that year and would be married when the long war ended.

Why do I dwell so briefly on this happy time? Read on to the close of this brief memoir and you will surely understand.

The years '45 and '46 were occupied by constant drilling and occasional skirmishes with the Scotch under Monroe, and during this period also Father Latham and I made several journeys to Kilkenny with messages from O'Neill to the Confederation.

It was not, however, until the arrival of the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini, in November, 1645, with large quantities of ammunition and arms that affairs took on a more hopeful aspect, and

the first move that our General made in the June of the following year resulted in the glorious victory of Benburb.

Owen Roe had received information that that able general, Monroe, had arranged that the three Scotch armies under himself, his brother, and the Stewarts should unite at a certain place and march upon Leinster, and he determined to defeat this plan by dividing the two brothers (whose forces were far the largest of the three) and beating them in detail.

We marched from Cavan and reached Grasslough on the fourth of June when Monroe had arrived in sight of Armagh and was camping at Dromore.

On that same day we marched for Benburb and camped beside the Blackwater, while Owen ordered Henry Roe O'Neill to push on with the light horse beyond Bagnal's Bridge towards Armagh.

Late that night Monroe's horse reached Armagh but his infantry encamped at Hamilton's Bawn and at dawn marched into the Cathedral city. That morning six thousand foot and eight hundred horse marched towards Dungannon, and midway on their line of march our troops were waiting. In the open air Father Latham,

assisted by others, celebrated Mass, and the whole of our great army knelt there in silent reverence.

It was then that O'Neill addressed us in words of fire.

"Remember Ireland and her long night of sorrow, and acquit yourselves like heroes in the battle. Whoever falters or retreats deserts Ireland and deserts me."

The Blackwater lay between the two armies, and as Monroe marched his men along one bank and endeavoured to find a ford, so our General moved his men along the other, and it was not until Caledon was reached that Monroe was able to cross over and to face O'Neill's army on the Tyrone bank. But it was at the junction of the Oona and the Blackwater that O'Neill had decided to give battle, and he was now occupied in trying to draw the enemy from Caledon to the chosen ground. Early in the day I had been sent with Brian Roe O'Neill to hold the second army of the enemy under check as it advanced from Coleraine, and O'Neill pointing out a narrow pass that they must march through told us to take it and hold it at all costs. These orders we effectually carried out later in the day, and assisted by the nature of the ground we

completely shattered George Monroe's small army in the attempt to join his brother at Benburb.

Meanwhile O'Neill had sent on General O'Farrell with his own regiment of foot to the pass of Ballaghkillagwill to harass the forces of Monroe and retreating slowly to entice them on towards the chosen position at Benburb. This manœuvre O'Farrell successfully carried out and fell back slowly on the Hill of Knocknacloy. It was here that O'Neill had decided the battle must take place, and our troops now took up the positions assigned to them. Our centre was resting on the Hill, while the right wing was protected by a bog and the left by the rivers Oona and Blackwater. Our front line was formed in four columns with open spaces between them, and so arranged that our second line of three columns could fill in these open spaces if necessary and so present an unbroken front to the enemy. Then our cavalry on the wings was massed behind the front column and ready to repel an attack or to charge through the open spaces in our ranks upon the foe.

We had no cannon, while the enemy had a powerful park of artillery, but our infantry were well armed with musket and pike.

Monroe's men now came on to the attack and spent the greater part of the afternoon in trying to force our centre.

Lord Blayney seized a little hill some short distance from Knocknacloy and pounded away right merrily but with very small results, it being a case of a great deal of gunpowder wasted and a great deal of noise. Under cover of this fire a large body of Scotch musketeers were moved along the banks of the Oona. When our men perceived them coming they rushed upon them with a great cheer, and by means of the deadly pike they utterly routed them.

After this the enemy again rallied, and Lord Ards with the Scottish cavalry made a bold attempt to turn our left flank, but they were here met by Henry Roe with the Irish horse, and being utterly routed they fell back again on the main body. Monroe's army was now packed into a very narrow space, and after this last repulse he concentrated all his cavalry for another desperate assault.

But our great Captain's time had now come, that supreme moment when his military genius flamed up in splendour.

Massing his men on the right flank he suddenly

took the offensive and ordered O'Farrell to keep pressing the forces of the enemy towards the angle where the Oona and Blackwater met.

O'Neill now dispatched all his best troops to the enemy's right and attacking them fiercely compelled them to change their front, which proceeding forced them towards the junction of the rivers, and increased their confusion.

It was at this point that Brian O'Neill and I returned from our successful fight against George Monroe, and came galloping at full speed along the road from Dungannon. The General now raised his hat, and called his staff around him. "Gentlemen," he cried, as he pointed to the enemy's centre, "in a few moments we shall be there. Pass the word along the line, *Sancta Maria*, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *charge for the old land.*"

With a roar our men sprang forward against the Scottish and English lines. Monroe ordered his cavalry to charge our foot soldiers, when suddenly between the open spaces of the infantry the Irish horse rushed out and scattered the enemy again. Then the infantry on both sides came together, the pikes stabbing and flashing in the air, while over the tumult and

the clash of steel we could hear our Captain calling—"Redouble your blows, strike home, and the day is ours."

Colonels sprang from their horses and pike in hand dashed up the little hill where Monroe's guns were firing. Like a living wall our men came on behind, and sweeping all before them like a wave of ocean they swept in upon the guns. The battle was now won. The Scotch and English turned and fled from the stricken field, pursued at every point by the Irish horse, and the sun sank down at last upon an annihilated army.

The victory was complete. We took tents, baggage and cannon, 1,500 draught-horses, 20 colours, prisoners of war and provisions for two months. Lord Ards fell into our hands, but Monroe escaped, and with a few horsemen retreated to Carrickfergus.

The following description was given to me by a Scottish exile whom I met in after years in Spain, and who fought upon the losing side on that glorious day:

"Sir James Montgomery's regiment was the only one which retired in a body, and it was to this regiment I had the honour to belong. All

the others fled in the utmost confusion, and most of the infantry were cut to pieces. Colonel Conway, after having two horses shot under him, made his escape almost miraculously to Newry with Captain Burke and about forty horse. Lord Montgomery and Lord Ards were taken prisoners with about twenty-one officers and one hundred and fifty common soldiers. There were found three thousand two hundred and forty-three slain on the field of battle, and others were killed next day in the pursuit. O'Neill had only about seventy killed, and two hundred wounded. He took all the Scots' artillery, being four field pieces, with most of their arms, thirty-two colours, their tents and baggage. The booty was very great: one thousand five hundred draught-horses were taken, and two months' provisions for the Scotch army—enough to serve the Ulster Irish (a hardy people, used to live on potatoes and butter, and content generally with only milk) double the time. Monroe fled without his wig and coat to Lisnegarvy, and immediately burned Dundrum, deserted Portadown, Clare, Glanevy, Downpatrick, and other places."

CHAPTER X.

Which tells how matters were moving in the South, and all about the battle of Dungan's Hill, the sack of Cashel and the battle of Knock-na-noss.

MEANWHILE matters were not going well with the Confederates in the South. In the summer of 1647 the Duke of Ormonde surrendered Dublin to the Parliamentarians and Colonel Jones took possession of the Castle. The Confederation now ordered General Preston to march towards Trim and manœuvre against the Puritan forces.

Jones, however, did not let the grass grow under him but marched in hot haste from Dublin, and meeting with some reinforcements from the North he faced Preston at Dungan's Hill, near Trim, with 12,000 foot and 700 horse.

He advanced against the Confederates who were strongly entrenched and who might easily have maintained the fight against superior numbers only for Preston's rashness. For

suddenly ordering his troops to act on the offensive they charged down the hill on the serried ranks of the Puritans who shattered their attack and threw the whole army into confusion.

Sir Alaster M'Donnell, who was acting under Preston, made desperate efforts to change the fortune of the day, but all bravery was hopeless in the face of such blundering, and the Irish army was driven into a morass where, no quarter being granted, it was cut to pieces.

The Confederates lost in that fight some 5,470 of their men, of whom 400 were M'Donnell's brave followers.

Frightened at this terrible disaster the Confederates now looked towards our General for protection, and, at the urgent desire of the Council, O'Neill set out with some 12,000 men for the scene of Preston's defeat, and we so harassed Jones by our rapid movements that he was glad to leave the open country and seek shelter behind the walls of Dublin.

O'Neill followed him to the very borders of Castleknock, ravaging the land behind him, and it was then that the terrified citizens of the Capital, watching from the tower of St. Audœn's,

could count 200 Irish watch-fires burning through the night.

It was about this period, I remember, that that turn-coat, Inchiquin, who was now siding with the Puritans, entered Tipperary and commenced his march of woe. He crossed the Suir in September and attacked the fortress of Cahir and captured it in one day, although it was reckoned one of the strongest castles in all Munster; for I have been told that in the days of Elizabeth it had held out for some two months against the entire army of Essex.

Towards the close of September Inchiquin came to the town of Cashel and ordered it to be surrendered immediately.

The authorities refusing he at once proceeded to storm it, and with small trouble battered down the walls. The small garrison threw down their arms and were slaughtered without mercy. He now turned his soldiers on the inhabitants, who were all cut down in turn irrespective of age or sex. Many of the people fled to the Cathedral on the Rock in the hopes of gaining protection in the sacred building, but Inchiquin poured volleys of musket balls through the doors and windows and then sent in his troopers to

complete the business with cold steel. The inside of the building was soon crowded with the mangled and dying men, and some priests who had sought shelter underneath the altars of the sacred building were dragged outside, and there slaughtered with indescribable fury.

It was said that the death roll in Cashel on that day amounted to some 3,000 people.

The town of Fethard now threw open its gates to Inchiquin, being terrified at the fate of Cashel, which had spread horror throughout Munster.

He next approached Clonmel and demanded its surrender, but only met with a stern defiance. For here the gallant Sir Alaster M'Donnell, with as many of his brave followers as could be collected after the slaughter of Dungan's Hill, had erected his standard, and his name was a host in itself. So after some time Inchiquin slunk away and retreated on Cahir.

In the commencement of November he again took the field and set up his camp at Mallow, on the 12th of that month, with some 6,000 foot and 1,200 horse.

Meanwhile the Confederate General, Lord Taaffe, with some 7,000 foot and nearly 1,200 horse, was stationed at Kanturk, some ten miles

away, and on finding out Inchiquin's position he advanced to a hill called Knock-na-noss and opened out his army in order of battle. To Sir Alaster M'Donnell, whom he had made his Lieutenant-General, he gave the command of the right wing, which was supported by Colonel Purcell with a couple of regiments of horse, while he himself took command of the left wing on the slope of the hill. Here he posted the Munster troops, consisting of some 4,000 foot and supported by two regiments of horse. His front was defended by a morass and a small stream which encircled the base of the hill, so that he held a sound position.

Inchiquin now advanced from Mallow and commenced the attack at a very great disadvantage.

M'Donnell's Northerns, following the Highland custom, flung away their muskets after the first volley and rushed in upon their foes with the broad-sword. They shattered Inchiquin's left wing and took his artillery, and pursued his men for miles across country killing some 2,000 of them.

On General Taaffe's wing, however, the same success was not apparent, for Inchiquin taking

advantage of a mistake on the part of the Confederate General sent in a squadron of horse so as to capture the summit of the hill. These horsemen charged from the rear and caused a complete panic in the left wing of the Confederate army. The Munster troops now fled in dismay and were slaughtered without resistance as they ran. Meanwhile M'Donnell's Northerns, returning from routing the enemy, were surprised by the victorious Inchiquin and cut to pieces.

Their heroic leader now yielded his sword to Colonel Purdon, but Inchiquin ordered that no quarter must be given, and so Sir Alaster M'Donnell was slain in cold blood.*

According to the account which Father Latham heard afterwards in Kilkenny some 4,000 of the Confederates were slain, and all their arms, colours and baggage were lost. On receiving the news of the victory the Parliament

* The death of Sir Alaster (Alexander) M'Donnell has added not a little to the tragic interest of Knock-na-noss. That brave soldier, who is famous in Scottish history as Sir Alaster M'Donnell and Colkitto (Colla the left-handed), having been sent by Randal, Marquis of Antrim, to Scotland in command of Irish troops, had borne a chief part in the victories gained by Montrose for the King in 1644.

His name is still remembered in the south of Ireland by a singular piece of music composed in his honour, and remarkably spirited and expressive of war. It was published by Bunting in his last collection of Irish melodies under the title of "M'Donnell's March."

of England voted £10,000 for Inchiquin's army and £1,000 as a present for himself.

They only sent him, however, a portion of the money, and feeling somewhat vexed at such conduct Inchiquin began to look about him and to consider if it would be possible to change sides again!

CHAPTER XI.

How I carried despatches to the Duke of Ormonde, and was present at the Battle of Rathmines.

IN the year 1648 matters became even more confused, for that turn-coat, Lord Inchiquin, who had formerly sided with the Puritans, now changed sides and combined with Preston against Jones.

The Duke of Ormonde now returned to Ireland and rallied around him the lay party of the Confederation, who were in reality English Royalists.

So the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini, denounced Ormonde and all his friends, and departing from the Confederation he joined our army under O'Neill at Maryborough.

The Confederation then proceeded to proclaim the Hero of Benburb as a rebel, and then Rinuccini in return excommunicated the Confederation.

In February, 1649, Rinuccini set out from Ireland in utter disgust, which can hardly be wondered at, but promised O'Neill that he

would send him foreign aid. Our Captain in the meantime held his little army well together, sometimes treating with the Puritans and sometimes with the Confederation simply for the purpose of gaining precious time until the promised aid should come, when he could march against their combined forces and crush them both.

So events were now rapidly approaching a crisis. On the 30th of January, 1649, Charles I. was executed at Whitehall, and on May 19th England was declared a Commonwealth. At the beginning of August, O'Neill sent me down to Ormonde (who was lying outside Dublin) with despatches in answer to the Duke's, who was now anxious to induce O'Neill to unite with him against the Puritan forces in Ireland.

I reached Dublin on the 20th of July and presented my despatches to the Duke of Ormonde, sometimes spoken of as the great Duke of Ormonde, though no one seemed to know the reason why. Perhaps because he proved himself so great a turn-coat and a bigot. He was, in fact, great at everything except his business—which was to win battles for the Royal cause, which he invariably lost.

It was told me in Clonmel that when General Cromwell was lodging in Ross town they showed him there a picture of my Lord of Ormonde, and he, gazing upon it, asked who it might be.

On hearing who it was he smiled and said: "The man whom the picture concerned was more like a huntsman than any way a soldier." Which was, indeed, most true, my Lord being more inclined that way both by education and by nature.

On my arrival I found him preparing to invest Dublin on all sides, although his army was by no means strong enough for a sure success.

It consisted of some 7,000 foot and about 1,700 horse-soldiers.

Lord Dillon was left with some 2,000 men to press the siege on the north side of the city, and then Ormonde crossed the Liffey with the remainder and encamped at Rathmines. Here it was his intention to extend his works to the east so that he might command the river's mouth and effectually prevent all supplies reaching the besieged in that way. His confidence in his soldiers was tremendous, and he told me that he truly believed that his men would undergo even starvation for the love of

King Charles! Before his plans could be carried out the garrison received reinforcements from England, when Colonel Reynolds, Venables and Huncks arrived with 1,600 foot and some 600 horse.

These men brought the information that the Parliament of England considered that Dublin was sufficiently garrisoned, and had decided to send General Cromwell into Munster with an army to crush all the disaffected towns of that province; and that he was only waiting for a favourable change in the weather to set out upon the journey.

The events which now followed are well set forth in that despatch which I assisted the Duke of Ormonde in drafting and which was afterwards forwarded to the King.

"Some two or three days before the defeat at Rathmines, we had it from many good hands out of England and from Dublin that Cromwell was at the seaside ready to embark for this kingdom with a great army, and that his design was for Munster, where we were sure he had intelligence, and which, if lost, not only the best ports in the kingdom would fall into his hands, but His Majesty's fleet riding in them, blocked

up with a mastering number of the rebels' ships, would doubtless be lost.

"So that if we had taken Dublin, which was very doubtful, and lost those ports, which it was very evident we should if he landed there, as they were then guarded, it was but an ill exchange; but if these places were lost and Dublin not gained, our army must have inevitably come to nothing, and the kingdom fallen to the rebels without resistance.

"These considerations at a council of war produced these results: first, that the Lord Inchiquin, with two regiments of horse, should then immediately march to secure the province of Munster; that the army should lie still where it was till Rathfarnham should be taken in; and that done, we should remove to a securer quarter at a place called Drimnagh, not far from Rathfarnham, if after the taking of Rathfarnham we found not cause to change that part of our determination.

"The next day, or the next day but one, Rathfarnham was taken by storm; all that were there were made prisoners; and though five hundred soldiers had entered the castle before any officers of note yet not one creature was

killed, which I tell you by the way, to observe the difference between our and the rebels making use of a victory.

"It was then taken into consideration what was to be done, and it was held necessary that we should possess a place called Baggotrath* and fortify it; which, if effected, must necessarily have starved all their horses within, which, by access of new forces whilst we lay at Finglas, were 1,200; and besides, that place being well fortified, it was easy then to have approached to the river side, that a work being cast up there it would be impossible for any further succour of men to have got into them.

"I should have told you that we had a strong party of horse and foot left on the other side of the river, which hindered their grazing that way, and hay they had none in the town.

"Thereupon it was ordered that my Lord of Castlehaven, General Preston, and Major-General Purcell should view the place; and if they found it capable of strengthening in one night's work then to cause men with materials to be sent as soon as it was dark. Accordingly the Major-

* Baggotrath Castle was close to the spot now occupied by Beggar's Bush Barracks.

General conducted thither 1,500 foot; but he met with so ill guides that, though it was within half a mile of our leaguer, he got not thither till a full hour before day.

"I sat up myself all that night, as well to be ready to answer any falling out of the enemy as to finish my despatches then ready for France.

"But as soon as day broke I rode down to Baggotrath, where I found the place itself not so strong as I expected, nor the work at all advanced, and strong parties of the enemy drawn out under their works; yet they hid themselves the best they could behind some houses at Lowsy Hill and in a hollow betwixt us and the strand. Hereupon I considered whether I had best go on with the work or draw off my men: draw them off I could not without great danger, but by drawing near them the whole army, and doing that, their work might be as well countenanced as their retreat. Then I called to me the Majors-General of the horse and foot, Purcell and Sir W. Vaughan, and showed them where I would have the horse and foot drawn, desiring them accordingly to see it done, telling them and all the officers there that I was confident Jones would hazard all to interrupt our

work, which effected, would so much annoy him.

"With these orders I left them, determining to refresh myself with a little sleep for the action I expected, and on my way to my tent I caused all the regiments to stand to their arms.

"It was by this time about nine of the clock, and I had not slept above an hour when I was awakened by volleys of shot, which I took to be much nearer me than Baggotrath. However, before I got an hundred yards from my tent, all those I left working were beaten out, and the enemy had routed and killed Sir W. Vaughan, and after him divers parties of horse drawn up in closes, into which the enemy could not come to them but through gaps and in files.

"This was the right wing of our army; and it was not long before I saw it wholly defeated, and many of them running away towards the hills of Wicklow, where some of them were bred and whither they knew the way but too well.

"Hereupon I went to the battalia, consisting of my Lord Inchiquin's foot, commanded by Colonel Giffard, with whose assistance I put them into the best position I could; and desired

my brother and Colonel Reilly to stand in a field next these foot, where I left them till I should either come or send them orders.

"How they were forced thence, or upon what occasion they charged, I know not; but I soon after perceived the enemy's horse had gotten round and was going through a lane, close by Giffard's foot, where I stood, to meet a party of foot of their own that were coming up in front of us.

"Giffard's foot gave good fire at them and so disordered them that had not the two regiments, which for that purpose I left there, been forced, or by some appearing advantage drawn off, but had charged these disordered horse in the rear, it is probable they had been driven over their foot; to which when they had come they rallied by them and with them advanced against us, who by this time were environed; another party of theirs of horse and foot being then come behind us into the field we stood in and giving fire both ways at us.

"At this and at the running away of Reilly's regiment our foot were so discouraged that they fought no more.

"On the contrary, I heard the enemy offer

them quarter, and observed them inclined to hearken to it.

"Then, leaping over a ditch, I endeavoured to get to our left wing, hoping to find it firm; but they had no sooner apprehended and too well seen how the world went with the right wing and battalia, and had most of them, horse and foot, provided for themselves.

"It is true that a great reserve of the enemy stood all this while facing them; which was the reason why I drew not to the assistance of the rest of the army, and that made them think themselves desperate. Yet some of them rallied; but as I advanced a step towards the enemy they broke away behind me, even upon the sight of their own men running away, taking them for the enemy."

CHAPTER XII.

Which tells of the attack on Dardistown Castle and how Shiela and I escaped to Drogheda.

AFTER the defeat of Ormonde at Rathmines I retreated with him to Kilkenny, and in the following August I set out from that town in company with Captain Armstrong with despatches for Sir Arthur Aston, who was holding the town of Drogheda for the King.

We lodged for one night outside Dublin and next day set out on the Balbriggan road for Drogheda.

When lodging that evening at Julianstown I remembered that the Castle of Dardistown was close by, and I prevailed upon Captain Armstrong to pay it a visit on our way and to rest there if possible for the following night.

I did this in the hopes of hearing some news of my cousin Shiela, whom I had never met since the summer of '44. We arrived at the Castle at about noon the next day and found

it strongly guarded by soldiers from the Drogheda garrison, who, however, admitted us without further parley on our presenting letters from the Duke of Ormonde.

On learning who I was Sir Richard Carvell greeted me very warmly and informed me that Mistress Brandon had been stopping here with her people for the last month, but that all the residents were setting out for Drogheda on the morrow as Sir Arthur was determined that the Castle must be abandoned and destroyed to prevent so valuable a place from falling into the hands of the Parliament. For it was well known that Cromwell had already arranged to seize and hold all the strongholds in the County Meath.

When the news of my arrival was brought to her, my pretty cousin came tripping down the stairs, holding out her hands to me and crying out my name; and when our greeting was fully over I could see Captain Armstrong leaning on his sword and smiling, and waiting to be presented to the blushing maid.

I like to think of her like that before all the dangers commenced and the great sorrow came —leaning over the balustrade and talking rapidly to us both, the colour rising to her cheeks at

every pretty compliment, and then paling when she heard about Oliver's advance.

"Then you cannot stay with me for any time, cousin," she said. "These, indeed, are sad times for us poor ladies who have to spend such lonely hours through all this cruel war, and bear so much inconstancy." I made her no answer, for a great heaviness had fallen on my heart as she spoke the words, but I remember Captain Armstrong humming those lines of Richard Lovelace's, which were the last words often spoken in those days by many a gallant cavalier—

"*Yet this inconstancy is such*
As thou, too, shalt adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more!"

"I suppose so," she said sadly, "the honour of our land."

"And the honour of our King," added Captain Armstrong, who was smitten like my cousin Rupert Gannon, and had caught the Stuart fever badly.

We were all gathered round the table that evening in the great dining hall and had drunk the usual healths, and the usual confusion to

Oliver, when a great knocking was heard at the outer gate—like the knocking of men not used to much delay.

In another moment the officer on guard came rushing in to tell us that the castle was surrounded upon every side with soldiers, and that a group of them around the main entrance were clamouring for admission in the name of the Parliament of England.

Sir Richard Carvell was very cool and collected in this emergency.

"We must at all cost get you away, Stranger," he cried, "and with your despatches for Sir Arthur. We must make a sortie and you shall escape in the confusion."

To our surprise Shiela now broke in upon the consultation.

"No, Sir Richard, there is a better way than that. I know the secret of the passage to the river which will bring Captain Stranger out upon the banks of the Nanny water below the bridge, and we can both proceed from there to the Drogheda road and bring the news of your condition to Sir Arthur Aston."

Just as she had finished speaking a terrific report rent the air.

"They are trying to shatter the outer gates with a petard," Captain Armstrong said. "We must up into the main tower and fire down upon the scoundrels," and he rushed from the room.

Shiela looked at me imploringly.

"For all our sakes, come quickly," she cried. I followed her to the far end of the old Hall and saw her press the wooden panelling under the ancient portrait of Hugh de Lacy, which revolved slowly inwards and disclosed a narrow passage at the back of the woodwork.

We pushed a small table under the picture and mounting upon it clambered in through the opening. Then as Shiela turned round and was calling to one of the men near the table to hand her a light from the silver candlestick I heard a second explosion and the crash of a door falling inwards.

Shiela caught me by the hand.

"We must risk the darkness," she cried, and as she spoke she swung the portrait back into its place and I heard the click of the secret catch closing underneath it.

"Follow me, Clarence, and walk carefully," I heard her whisper, and then we passed down, down into the sloping passage, through the

sickening smell of damp earth and on through the impenetrable darkness.

We must have travelled on for about a quarter of a mile, stumbling and groping our way, when our further progress was obstructed by an iron door which blocked the entire passage.

Shiela, however, stooped down and pressing against the foot of the door told me to push against the centre with my entire strength, when the huge mass of iron swung slowly outwards on hinges.

The mouth of the passage was carefully cloaked by thickets which grew so closely across it that it could not be detected from the road or the bridge above it.

Pushing these aside we stepped out into the open and caught a glimpse of the dark river flowing beside us.

We ascended on to the bridge and walking as rapidly as the darkness would permit we turned to the left by the old forge and took the Duleek road. Looking back in the direction of the Castle we could hear the distant sounds of the attack, and once or twice caught the gleaming flash of the musketry from the towers.

I caught Shiela by the hand and we ran on for

some distance, and then walked to gain breath and again took up the running. Very trying work this was and very bravely endured by her, for her heart was beating I expect with something more than bodily strain.

"Will they pursue us?" she kept asking again and again, and was constantly turning round to look behind.

I tried to laugh her out of all fear. There was little chance, I told her, even if they took the Castle of their noticing our absence. No one knew I was carrying despatches, or the road I had taken from Dublin.

I had hardly finished speaking when the rain began to fall in great heavy showers which drenched us through, and the wind rose, too, at this time and began moaning through the trees.

We had reached the bottom of the rising ground some two hundred yards from the church of Kilsharvan when I thought I heard the sound of horses' hoofs between the pauses of the wind.

We stopped and listened.

At first we heard nothing, for the fury of the wind seemed to have increased and to have effectually blotted out all sounds upon the road, but suddenly a great lull came and we could

hear plainly the horrid tapping of horses on the gallop.

I stood there in the middle of the road with my arm round about my cousin, whose long hair was dripping over her shoulders and her cold cheek pressed against mine. I could feel the poor little body shivering with fright and cold, and I daresay that there were tears enough washed away that night by the pitiless never-ending rain.

We struggled on to the top of the rising ground and there we heard the horsemen clearly, and not very far off.

"We must hide behind the church," I said, "and trust that they may pass along to Duleek."

It is at this point of the road that another branch to the right leads the traveller into Drogheda, some four miles away, and I hoped if the horsemen were soldiers of the Parliament they might ride straight on and leave our progress free.

We climbed over the low stone wall which protects the little churchyard, and stumbling over some of the tombstones we crouched down behind the back wall of the church and listened.

Soon out of the intense darkness of the trees

two Cromwellian troopers emerged at the full gallop, but on drawing level with the church they suddenly drew up and held a short consultation. Then they both dismounted, drew their swords, and dividing came slowly towards the spot where we were hiding.

I passed one of my pistols into Shiela's hands, drew out my sword, and waited.

What passed after that comes full upon me now like a horrid dream.

I remember the foremost of the two troopers had come within ten yards of us when I rose up from my place by the wall and challenged him to halt.

He answered with a great cry and said something which sounded like a concatenation of oaths, though being a Puritan it should have been a prayer, and then he rushed in upon me with his uplifted sword.

As he came on I fired the pistol in my left hand at the lower part of his body and missed him badly, and then we came together hacking and slashing at one another in the half darkness.

I often wonder how we managed to thrust and parry in that awful night, for though the dawn was breaking I could barely catch the outlines

of his body, so I take it that we must have been gifted like cats in the dark, and that I was the better cat.

As I passed my sword through him and he sank against one of the tombstones, his companion, who had gone round the other end of the church, now came up behind, and had made as fair an end of me as I had of his comrade, when Shiela raised her pistol and gave him the full contents.

He lurched and fell his full length backwards, sobbed for a few moments and then died.

The rest of that cruel journey is soon told. I led my little trembling lady to the churchyard wall and placed her on one of the troopers' horses taking the other for myself. Then we took the turning to the right and rode on past Crofty Wood, reaching Drogheda when the dawn had fully broken.

After the usual explanations we were admitted by the Duleek Gate; and having placed my cousin in the safe keeping of Sir Richard Carvell's wife, who lived in the old house beside St. Lawrence's Gate, I rode forward to present myself to Sir Arthur Aston.

CHAPTER XIII.

How Father Latham visited Dublin in disguise, and was present at the landing of Cromwell.

AT the date of my arrival with Shiela in Drogheda, which was late in the month of August, 1649, Oliver Cromwell had already landed in Dublin with the forces of the English Parliament some days before, and was mustering his men for an assault on this stronghold. When I delivered my despatches to Sir Arthur Aston (as gallant a soldier as one could wish to meet) he informed me that Father Latham had arrived the day before with despatches from General O'Neill, who mentioned that I would remain under Sir Arthur's command until further notice. For O'Neill had now entered into a treaty with the King's party to combine against Cromwell, whom he rightly recognised to be more dangerous than Ormonde, Inchiquin and Jones all rolled into one.

When I saw Father Latham that afternoon

he told me the sad news which I had already expected, namely, that our gallant General was slowly dying and that a great name and a great fame would soon be quenched in Erin.

So at the very hour when Ireland wanted him so badly, when he had already arranged to march southwards to measure his sword against Cromwell's, Death stood in the path of the only general among the Irish commanders who understood the real art of war.

It was this sad news that prevented me from desiring to return to the North, and also the knowledge that in Drogheda I would be close to Shiela to protect her in the hour of danger.

That evening I was placed in charge of a company defending part of the south wall near St. Mary's Church, and I was under the command of Colonel Wall.

When I was on guard that night Father Latham came and shared it with me, and the time passed very pleasantly while he related his adventures in Dublin.

For he had visited that city disguised, and was present when Cromwell had arrived.

Oliver had landed, he told me, at Ringsend, near Dublin, and Sir George Ascough had

secured the mouth of the river for him with his ships.

His original design, however, was that Ireton should have landed with part of the army in Munster, which was looked upon as the key of the kingdom, having many cities and walled towns and great fruitfulness. Besides all this there were many fine harbours lying open both to France and Spain. He had also received assurances that his forces would be received with favour in the South.

The success, however, of Jones, and the necessity of recovering some of the garrisons near Dublin, made him alter these intentions and order all the troops to land in Dublin.

At this time Inchiquin, too, was master of the South and was fighting on the King's side, though no one ventured to guess how long this would continue.

The invading army was made up of Scroop's, Lambert's, Horton's, Ireton's, and Cromwell's own regiments of horse. Also Fletcher's, Garland's, Mercer's, Abbott's, and Bolton's troops of dragoons. To these must be added Cooke's, Hewson's, Ewer's, Deane's, and Cromwell's regiments of foot, together with Colonel

Phayre's Kentish regiment, and you will see that Father Latham had not been idle.

The divisions of Jones and Monk, which had been in Ireland for some time, all came under Cromwell's command, so that we both calculated that he must have had a total army of close upon 17,000 men; most of whom were veterans in war and in high spirits at their recent smashing up of the English Cavaliers.

Besides all these men he had an abundance of military stores, several pieces of artillery, and large sums of money.

Among his officers Father Latham had seen his son Henry Cromwell, Jones, Blake, Sankey and Ingoldsby, all equally prominent in bringing about the death of Charles I. and in raising up the Commonwealth of England.

On his arrival in Dublin Oliver was heroically entertained with salutes from all the guns round about the city, and a great crowd went out to see him. When he reached the centre of the town he caused his carriage to stop and made a great speech to the people, and all the while holding his hat in his hand. "He did not doubt that, as God had brought him thither in safety, so he would be able by Divine Provi-

dence to restore them all to their just liberties and properties. All these persons whose hearts' affections were real for the carrying of the great work against the barbarous and bloodthirsty Irish and all their adherents and confederates, for the propagating of the Gospel of Christ, the establishing of truth and peace, and restoring of this bleeding nation of Ireland to its former happiness and tranquillity, should find favour and protection from the Parliament of England and from himself, and withal receive such rewards and gratuities as should be answerable to their merits."

When he had finished speaking the people gave him great applause, and some of them cried out "We will live with you and die with you." His audience was chiefly Protestant at this time, as no Catholics were allowed to remain in Dublin; for when Ormonde had surrendered the city to Colonel Jones they were all forced to leave.

They were forbidden to return under severe penalties, and no one could pass the night within the city walls except under pain of death.

This order was renewed by the English Parliament, with the additional clause that anyone

giving shelter to a priest or a Jesuit, even for a single hour, should lose his life and forfeit his property.

Before setting out on his northward march Oliver with great cleverness issued a proclamation stating that all the country people not in arms would be free from molestation by the soldiers. Also, that all food-supplies brought in by them for his army would be punctually paid for; the result of which was that his men were far better supplied with food than any of the other armies in Ireland.

Before leaving Dublin Father Latham saw Oliver face to face one evening when he was returning to his house at the corner of Werburgh and Castle streets. He also told me that there was a deal of preaching from the Puritans and much exhortation. But in spite of their deep religious feeling the troopers had stabled their horses in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

CHAPTER XIV.

Which tells of the state of Drogheda when Cromwell marched from Dublin.

ON the 23rd of August the Confederates had held a council of war and had decided that Drogheda must be held against the enemy at all cost. Sir Arthur Aston had, therefore, given orders that the castles of Bellewstown, Athcairne, Belgard and Dardistown must be destroyed in order to prevent the Puritans from using them. But the enemy proved too quick for him, and securing some of them without resistance had advanced with a great body of horse to Dardistown, and attacked it as I have already related; the castle finally falling after a very brave defence. The Duke of Ormonde, who believed that Drogheda would be the first point of Cromwell's attack, had ordered all the fortifications to be thoroughly repaired and the town to be well stored with food and ammunition.

He then ordered all suspected persons to leave the town, but it was not until the last moment that he left himself.

To give him his due he seemed anxious to share our dangers, but stated that it would never do for him to be shut up there and be unable to give orders to his forces in the different parts of Ireland.

He believed that the town was in a fit state to stand a prolonged siege, and by detaining the enemy around it he hoped to have good time for uniting his forces with those of Inchiquin, and, if possible, of Owen Roe O'Neill. As a matter of fact, however, the town was in a very indifferent state. We had not a sufficient supply of powder and very little match, and were short of round shot as well. The provisions, too, would not have lasted our numbers for any length of time.

It was true that we had managed to get rid of most of the suspected persons, but some of the ladies had proved themselves too clever for Sir Arthur Aston, who learnt to his dismay that Lady Wilmot and some others who happened to be his near relatives were in treasonable communication with Colonel Jones and other

officers of the Puritan forces now about to set out from the city of Dublin.

Our garrison consisted of some 2,220 foot and 320 horse, most of whom were Irish.

We had Ormonde's regiment of 400 men, under the command of Sir Edward Verney; Colonel Wall's regiment (where I served); Colonel Byrne's and Colonel Warren's regiments which amounted to close upon 2,000 men; Lord Westmeath's with 200 more; Sir James Dillon's with 200 foot and 200 horse, besides 500 foot sent to us at the last moment under Lieutenant-Colonel Griffen Cavenagh. The horse-soldiers were divided into five troops, commanded respectively by Major Butler, Captain Harpole, Sir John Dungan, Sir James Preston, Lieutenant-Colonel Dungan, and Captains Plunket, Fleming, and Finglas. Our entire artillery force consisted of one master-gunner, two gunners, and three gunners' mates.

Our commander, Sir Arthur Aston (who was residing in a house at the corner of Patrick's Well Lane, formerly belonging to the Elcock family), was a Catholic and came of an ancient Cheshire family. He had served in the army of Sigismund, King of Poland, against the Turks,

and when the Civil War had broken out he returned to England and was made a Colonel-General of dragoons.

At Edgehill he fought with great valour, and afterwards was made Governor of Reading and Oxford. There was not, I think, in the King's army a man of greater reputation, or one of whom the enemy had a greater dread. When discussing the mode of defence with us before Cromwell delivered his attack he seemed full of confidence about the final issue. Father Latham told me afterwards that he actually sent a letter of confidence to Ormonde saying that he would find the enemy play for some time, and that the garrison being select men was such a strong one that the town could not be taken by assault. Finally, that we were all unanimous in our resolution to perish rather than deliver up the place.

The fortifications of the town consisted of a wall about one mile and a half in length which enclosed an area of close upon sixty-four Irish acres.

In height it was about twenty feet, and in thickness from four to six feet, which diminished as the summit was approached in order to allow

a space of about two feet for the defenders to stand upon.

The gates which guarded the northern side of the town were the West Gate, composed of two towers with a strong portcullis between; Fair Gate; Sunday's Gate, which was a square castle having close to it two towers, the Tooting and Boulter's; St. Lawrence's and St. Catherine's.

On the Meath side were St. James' or the Dublin Gate; the Blind Gate, Duleek Gate, St. John's Gate, and finally, the Butter gate, which was an octagon perforated with an arched passage. These, then, were the defences of our town, and the numbers of our garrison, when on the night of the 2nd of September news was brought in to Sir Arthur Aston that a large body of the enemy's horse was encamped some two miles beyond the town.

CHAPTER XV.

Which tells of the nine days before the final assault of Drogheda.

IT was on Friday, 31st of August, that General Cromwell mustered all the forces under his command, and having chosen from them some 10,000 choice men he set out upon his march for Drogheda.

Placing himself at their head he crossed the Liffey and encamped some three miles to the north of Dublin in the field of Lord Barnwell.

On the following day he resumed his march, passing along the high road through Swords and Balbriggan, and late that evening he pitched his camp at Ballygarth near to the Nanny water and some twenty miles from Dublin. On the following evening he reached Drogheda. We heard afterwards that on passing Gormanstown he had attempted to seize the heir, who was a mere infant in arms, but had been foiled in his endeavours by the parish priest, who fled with the child to France and had him brought up afterwards in the Catholic faith.

During this northward march Sir George Ascough had attended the army with his ships and had now blocked up the mouth of the Boyne, thus preventing all chance of aid in that direction. On the morning of the 3rd of September Sir Arthur Aston sallied forth with his horse, but found that the enemy were a great deal too strong to engage, and so he ordered Captain Finglas to remain on the field, engaging himself only with small parties of the enemy upon advantage, and to gain any information with regard to their movements.

In the afternoon he brought us news that five hundred of the enemy's horse were advancing towards Oldbridge, and later on the greater part of Cromwell's army appeared before the walls. We saw their foot being convoyed over by an overawing power of horse, and they soon took up all the advantageous positions before the walls, so we expected them to make their batteries that night.

During the skirmishing that day we lost one captain out of Colonel Warren's regiment, and Major Butler had two horses killed and one or two soldiers wounded.

The days which followed were full of anxiety.

We made constant sallies on the enemy and a few men were killed on both sides.

One day I remember particularly when Sir Thomas Armstrong made a gallant sortie with about two hundred men, but they were all so well entertained by the enemy that the entire body was captured, with the solitary exception of Sir Thomas, who escaped within the walls owing to the excellence of his horse.

On the 8th of September Sir Arthur Aston himself made a very strong sortie and inflicted considerable injury on the foe. Then at last came that memorable 9th of September when Cromwell gave the order for the batteries to begin to play.

When the guns had opened fire he sent a summons to Sir Arthur asking him to deliver the town to the Parliament of England, or else to take the full consequences of refusal.

Not receiving a satisfactory answer, he immediately took down the white flag which hung over his quarters, and I could see him from the Millmount* ordering a red ensign to be hoisted in its place.

He then proceeded to beat down the steeple

* The Millmount is where the Martello Tower now stands.

of St. Mary's Church with a battery of guns on the south side of the walls, while another battery playing against the east side was occupied in destroying the tower which protected the south-east corner of our defences.

The long day ended at last without any breaches large enough for a successful assault having been made, but the destruction of the steeple of St. Mary's was a great loss to us, for we had placed some guns in position there, and these in conjunction with some long fowling-pieces had wrought considerable destruction among the enemy.

I remember late that night when we were gathered round Sir Arthur Aston on the Mill-mount to receive his final instructions for the defence on the morrow, the men outside the walls lifted up their voices suddenly in song.

We all gazed to the south.

"Is that a Puritan hymn?" said young Lieutenant Duncan. "Do they think sweet music will assist them in storming the strong walls of Drogheda?"

"They sang like that," said Colonel Croswaithe, an old cavalier who had shared in many a hopeless fight for the glory of King Charles;

"they sang like that at Marston Moor and Naseby, and when they rose up they scattered us like chaff before the wind."

A silence fell upon us all.

The night was clear and fine, and the heavens were studded thickly with the peaceful stars. Far below I could see the waters of the Boyne glimmering in the starlight and winding their way towards the distant sea, while away to the south and east where the Cromwellian army lay I saw the darkness lighted by a hundred watch fires.

Once more the stillness of the night was broken, as clear from a thousand rugged throats burst forth in solemn grandeur the old Hundred and Seventeenth Psalm:

"*O give ye praise unto the Lord,*
All nati-ons that be,
Likewise ye people all, accord
His name to magnify!

For great to-us-ward ever are
His lovingkindnesses,
His truth endures for evermore:
The Lord O do ye bless!"

CHAPTER XVI.

How Cromwell stormed the walls of Drogheda, and how Sir Arthur Aston died.

DURING the morning of the 10th of August their guns began to play furiously against the south and east walls of the city, and while this terrific cannonade was in progress we were hard at work making entrenchments to impede their advance should they succeed in making an entrance into the town.

The enemy succeeded at last in knocking two good breaches in the walls, and it was about five o'clock in the afternoon when they advanced to the storm.

They had taken their positions opposite St. Mary's in the hope that when they had taken the church they could use it as a protection against our men, until such a time as the remainder of their horse and foot had got in through the breaches.

In through the two openings these Roundhead

warriors poured and were met by a sweeping fire from our men, who then dashed in upon them with the cold steel.

Here in this south-east corner the assault raged furiously until inch by inch, amid the crying of the wounded and the dying, the rattle of muskets, and the clash of steel, our men drove them back again into the open, defeated and disheartened for the time.

After a short breathing space Oliver ordered them to advance again, and once more the flower of the Puritan army swept in upon us for the second time.

Again the same hand-to-hand fighting took place and again for the second time they were driven from the breaches, their brave leader, Colonel Castle, being shot through the head, and divers of their officers and men killed and wounded.

Now came the supreme moment of the attack. As the light was beginning to wane I saw from my position on the rampart of the south wall General Cromwell placing himself at the head of the storming party and waving them on again towards the breaches.

As he advanced towards the wall I saw his

face clearly for the first time, and it has haunted me for many a night since then in horrid dreams —those harsh and cruel features, showing, however, great sagacity and depth of thought; the grey piercing eyes and the large reddish nose out of all proportion to the face. Then I lost sight of him in the tide of battle. Now that they were led on in person by their General the Puritans were not to be denied, and so fierce was their onslaught that we were driven back into our entrenchments, and finally had to quit these and retreat, being greatly disheartened by the death of Colonel Wall, who commanded this part of the defence and who was shot through the head. The enemy now took possession of the entrenchments and of St. Mary's Church, and still forcing our men backwards they let in all the remainder of their horse and foot through the undefended breaches.

I had retreated to where Sir Arthur Aston was standing at the foot of the Millmount, and I remember how Captain Harvey rode up in the confusion and besought him to retreat with us to the top: "Where we must fight to the last," said he, "but never surrender to these Puritan dogs."

Then I caught the answer of old Colonel Croswaithe clear above the roar of battle, "God damn you, sir," he cried out fiercely, "would you teach Sir Arthur Aston how a cavalier should die?"

The fight raged furiously on, our men resisting gallantly, but against overwhelming numbers. Soon the greater part of our army were driven across the bridge into the northern portion of the town, while I, with the other officers and some fifty men had retreated with Sir Arthur Aston to the top of the Millmount, and being assisted there by the palisades were making a warm defence.

At this point of the fight I was shot through the left shoulder, and what with the burning pain and the loss of blood, I grew sick indeed, and must have fainted for a short time. When I came to I found myself lying alongside of a dead soldier. On looking round I saw that the enemy must have captured the Millmount, for Sir Arthur and some of the others were standing there without their swords, and I saw that there was some kind of parleying going on. All of a sudden someone cried out that they were the General's orders, and at a sign from

one of the Roundhead rascals the heated soldiers fell on these defenceless men.

They hacked Sir Arthur Aston into pieces, and tearing off his wooden leg under the delusion that it was built of gold, they dashed his brains out with it in their disappointed fury.

When their treacherous and bloody work was properly completed they retreated down the Millmount towards the Boyne leaving me alone in my dull pain and horror.

Slowly the night deepened.

I had lain there moaning very gently and feeling glad to die, when a cold hand pressed upon my forehead, and on looking up I saw Father Latham disguised as a Puritan preacher with a long cloak and a pious broad-brimmed hat bending over me.

"Not dead, thank God," he said.

"No," I answered, "only praying constantly for death."

"Courage!" was all this good man said, and commenced to rapidly bind up the wound. When he had finished I pointed to the mangled bodies.

"I know," he said fiercely, "it is the same everywhere. Noll heard he had the flower

of the Irish army at his mercy and he means to wipe it out. When they surrender at the last he orders his desperadoes to cut them down."

I held out my right hand and caught him by the coat, for a fresh agony had seized upon me.

"Is Shiela safe?" I whispered hoarsely.

"I hope so," Father Latham answered. "When our men had retreated pell-mell across the bridge into the upper town I conducted her and Lady Carvell to St. Peter's Church where all the ladies of the town had assembled for safety."

As he spoke my eyes were attracted by a sudden glare in the direction of the Boyne, which increased each moment in splendour and shot up into the sky.

"What can that be, Father?" I said feebly, raising myself and staring towards the conflagration.

He gazed through the darkness for some moments and then put his hand suddenly across his eyes as if the sight of the increasing fire hurt him. "My God," he said slowly, "the tower of St. Peter's is in flames!"

CHAPTER XVII.

Which tells of our escape to Monasterboice and completes the story of the sack of Drogheda.

OF what followed after this I have but a faint, dreamy recollection.

I know that Father Latham lifted me in his arms and carried me down in the darkness through St. Mary's churchyard. Then waiting for a favourable opportunity he slipped through the breach made in the east wall, and the next thing I knew was that he was bathing my aching forehead with the cool water of the streamlet of the Dale valley which flows beneath the slope by the east wall into the Boyne.

I now was able to stand up in a feeble kind of way, and leaning heavily on my kind protector we passed along the valley to the Boyne water where a skiff was lying at a point some three hundred yards from St. James' Gate.

Father Latham placed me in the stern-sheets

and rowed out into the darkness towards the mouth of the river.

When we had advanced about a quarter of a mile we landed on the south side, and he had me conveyed from there by a circuitous route to Monasterboice, where, in a peasant's cottage near the ancient churchyard, I lay between life and death for many a weary day.

During those sad hours my illness was greatly aggravated by the anxiety concerning Shiela's fate, and it was now impossible for me to obtain any certain information; for Father Latham, after seeing me properly cared for, had been obliged to return to the bedside of General O'Neill, whose last days were approaching.

It was told me, however, that some of the ladies had escaped in the confusion through one of the northern gates, but the account which I received of the completion of Cromwell's cruel work did not tend to reassure me.

After Sir Arthur Aston was slain upon the Millmount the fierce tide of battle moved on over the bridge and the retreating garrison sought different positions of shelter in the northern half of the town. All those who could not find shelter were immediately cut

down, no man, woman or child being spared, while those who found an asylum in the towers and churches only escaped death for a while.

Some hundred men with their officers took possession of St. Peter's Church steeple, while others entered the towers of West Gate and more occupied the round tower hard by the gate called St. Sunday's. All those in the steeple of St. Peter's were summoned by Cromwell to yield to mercy, but having noted what mercy this murderer had dealt out to others they declined to come down.

Upon this he ordered his soldiers to set fire to the steeple and roasted many of them alive; and from the midst of the dreadful flames was one voice heard crying out in agony, "God damn me, God confound me, I burn, I burn," which from the method used of calling on his Maker, I would interpret that this had been an English cavalier.

Some of those imprisoned in the steeple managed to reach the door, where they were all hacked to pieces. One man only escaped. He leaped from the top of the tower and was not killed, but only broke his leg; so the soldiers gave him quarter for the quaintness of the thing.

For being filled, as they have frequently announced, with the true spirit of religion, they no doubt took it for an act of God.

In the street leading to St. Peter's there was a regular torrent of blood from the number of those slain, and it poured down the hill into the river.

On the day after this terrible work the Bolton and the West Towers were summoned, but the small garrison refused to yield, whereupon General Cromwell ordered the place to be surrounded and the men starved out.

From their favourable position the garrison killed and wounded many of the besiegers, but hunger telling on them at the last they came down and submitted. Whereupon their officers were all knocked upon the head, and after every tenth man of the common soldiers had been slain the rest were shipped for the Barbadoes.

When the Puritans were advancing up the towers and along those galleries of the church each one of them took up a child with him and used it as a shield of defence to prevent themselves from being shot or brained. After they had killed all in the church they went down to the vaults where the choicest of the women and ladies had concealed themselves, and slew them

without mercy; being moved by the spirit to take a full revenge for the Rising of '41. Though what these poor ladies had to do with that affair it would be hard to know, while some of them were the wives of English cavaliers who had only lately come to Ireland.

One can imagine General Cromwell, when these bloody deeds were properly completed, offering up a prayer of thanksgiving in his raucous voice; while the heated murderers gathering round would indulge for a change "in a few moments of silent prayer" for the late mercies vouchsafed unto them.

Upon this occasion Cromwell exceeded everything that was ever heard of in breach of faith and of inhumanity; for the cruelties exercised there, and for five days after the town was taken, would make as many pictures of inhumanity as are to be found in "*The Book of Martyrs*" or "*The Relation of Amboyna.*"

Everything in the sacred places was plundered, the library, the sacred chalices, of which there were many of great value, were all destroyed.

When the soldiers were searching through the ruins of the city they came upon two priests, Father John Bathe and his brother.

Suspecting that they were religious, they examined them, and finding them to be priests they led them off in triumph to the market-place where, pretending to extinguish the Catholic religion, they tied them to stakes in the ground and pierced their poor bodies with shot until they expired.

Father Robert Netterville, who was far advanced in years, was confined to bed by his infirmities, but was dragged thence by the soldiers and trailed along the ground, knocking against every obstacle on the way.

He was then beaten with clubs, and when many of his bones were broken he was cast out on the highway; but some good Catholics came during the night and bearing him away he was hid in safety.

Four days after, having fought the good fight, he departed this life, to receive, as we hope, the martyr's crown.

It was told me by an English soldier who was present at these scenes that the thought of mercy first entered General Cromwell's heart at the sight of an infant trying to obtain nourishment from its dead mother's breast, who was lying slain in one of the streets. But, indeed,

the angel of mercy might have spared her knockings at that iron door, for at that time it was found that there was nobody left in the place to kill.

Thus was the fate of Drogheda town decided nine days after Oliver Cromwell had appeared before the walls.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Telling of the death of Owen Roe O'Neill and of the suspicions which it aroused, together with a few words about the Lady Rosa.

AS I lay ill of my wound at Monasterboice the sad news was brought to my bedside that our gallant leader was dead. He had died on the 6th of November.

It was his hope to have joined Ormonde in the middle of December at Carrickmacross, and he was all eagerness to show his goodwill and his entire forgetfulness of past injuries.

No one seemed to be certain of the symptoms of his disease, for some said it was a defluxion in the knee, they thought, which proved so painful that he was unable to ride, nor could he suffer being carried on a litter.

Others stated that his death was due to poison from a pair of russet boots sent to him by a gentleman named Plunket, in the County of Louth, who afterwards boasted that he had

done the English a good service by despatching O'Neill out of the world.

There was also a rumour that he was poisoned by Sir Charles Coote who entertained him with a great parade of hospitality and extraordinary plenty.

He is stated to have given him some subtle poison at table which paralyzed his energies to such a degree that he could not mount his horse. This was a lingering operation, weakening him day by day.

During the first month of his illness his physician, O'Shiel, was absent; and the doctor acting in his place mistook his malady for gout and treated him accordingly.

He battled bravely against his disease hoping that he might soon recover sufficiently to be able to place himself at the head of the army which he so dearly loved.

But it was decided otherwise.

From Derry, where he had first been attacked, he moved slowly and in great pain through Tyrone and Monaghan into Cavan, and from Ballyhaise he was borne to Cloughouter, where lived his brother-in-law, Philip Maelmora O'Reilly. It was here he breathed his last.

Many of his comrades could not believe that he would die at a time when his skill and valour were so greatly needed.

Some deemed that God, in His divine clemency, would not deal so strait with this poor nation as to bereave them of him, their only champion; but rather, the world being unworthy of so good a masterpiece, had lulled him to sleep and snatched him away to some secret corner of the world, to keep him there for future, better purposes.

With regard to the Lady Rosa, his true and faithful wife, the neice of Hugh O'Neill's lieutenant, Tyrrell (the hero of Tyrrellspass) she outlived all her kinsmen, and for ten more years was the witness of her country's weight of sorrow.

Many years after, when I was fighting in the Netherlands for the King of Spain, I came across her tomb near Brussels, where she rests in the same grave with her first-born. And there I saw, with deep emotion, the marble slab which proudly tells the stranger that underneath sleeps the "widow of Don Eugenio O'Neill, the General of the Catholic Irish."

CHAPTER XIX.

How I joined Hugh O'Neill at Clonmel, with an account of the Siege by Cromwell.

IT was not until the close of March, 1650, that I had sufficiently recovered from my wound to leave my kind protectors at Monasterboice, and I joined my regiment at Clonmel without having heard any news of Shiela's fate.

We were now under the command of Owen Roe's nephew, Hugh O'Neill; and when I reached my destination I found him straining every nerve to put the town in a proper state of defence in order to give Noll a warm reception. For having finished his cruel treatment of Wexford and his conquests of other places, Cromwell was now marching against Clonmel under the impression that a single summons would be sufficient to ensure its immediate surrender.

On the 27th of April he appeared before the walls.

Our garrison consisted of only fifteen hundred foot, and one hundred horse, under Major Fennell's command, but the town itself was well protected on the south side by the river Suir, and on the remaining sides by a strong wall.

Hugh O'Neill had written to Ormonde telling him that the garrison was of good courage and resolution, and that on Clonmel the safety of the kingdom chiefly depended.

But he besought him to prevent any tragedy from being enacted there as in other places, for the want of timely relief, and begged that the army should march day and night to our succour.

Ormonde promised to send us reinforcements, but they never turned up, and Clonmel was left to its fate.

On arriving before the town Cromwell sent in a summons to surrender and offered favourable terms, but Hugh O'Neill only answered that he was of another resolution than to give up the town on quarters and conditions till he was reduced to a lower station, and so wished him to do his best.

On hearing this reply Noll immediately planted his cannons, and during this time several sallies were made by us with great success. For

O'Neill always behaved himself both wisely, courageously, and fortunately against Cromwell and his party, not only in a defensive but in an offensive way also, with many valiant sallies and martial stratagems to the enemy's mighty prejudice. For they lost on some days two hundred men, and on others three hundred, four hundred, and five hundred men.

These losses came so often that Cromwell began to weary of Clonmel, and only that his honour impeded him he would have quitted the place and have raised the siege. He saw, however, that no succour was coming to us, and that we were losing men and ammunition daily, and so he continued pressing us with many stratagems which our gallant Hugh invariably spoiled. He then decided to adopt another measure, and receiving the information he desired from some of Inchiquin's party, he at length alighted upon a fit instrument of treachery. Major Fennell, who commanded our horse, was the traitor with whom Cromwell entered into correspondence, and promised a reward of £500 and a free pardon for ranging himself against the Parliament, if he undertook to open one of the gates on the north side of

the town on the following night at twelve o'clock, and to admit five hundred of the enemy.

I happened to be on guard at that gate, so Fennell suspecting me and my Ulster warriors changed us to another gate and placed some of his own unreliable soldiers in our place.

I immediately reported the matter to O'Neill, who had given strict orders that at least two-thirds of the gate-guards should be Ulster men.

His suspicions were at once aroused, and cross-questioning the officer on guard, he had him placed in custody.

Fennell then seeing that his game was over confessed all on condition of receiving a full pardon.

When O'Neill knew the full plot he had all the gates strengthened by powerful reinforcements, and an extra five hundred men at the gate where the enemy were to enter. All this was done without noise so as to raise no suspicion.

Advising then with the rest what was best to do in this extremity O'Neill decided to open the gate according to the former covenant.

The enemy was watching his opportunity, and observing the signal marched towards the gate. Five hundred did enter, but the rest

nolens volens were kept out. The gate was then shut, and the five hundred put to the sword.

Cromwell, disgusted at the preposterous issue of his bargain with Fennell, was greatly troubled in mind, and therefore sent for more reinforcements and larger cannon.

He despatched messengers to Lord Broghill telling him that his army was in a pitiable condition from disease, and greatly disheartened by the many repulses it had met with, and stating that he must raise the siege unless reinforced. Finally he conjured him by all the ties of duty and friendship to come to his assistance.

As soon as this additional force came up Noll bombarded our faithful garrison with renewed energy, and soon after, with the continual thunderings, a long breach was made near one of the gates; but it proved not to be level enough when night fell.

This breach was made near the west wall some twenty yards south of the tower, called the magazine.

Within two hours after, Hugh O'Neill sent two hundred chosen men and officers, with a good guide, through byways from a place at the

wall next the river that was neglected by the besiegers, and they fell on the backs of some who occupied a fort not fully finished, and cut them off before any relief came.

On this being accomplished the next gate was immediately opened for them, and they got in safely with the loss of only half-a-dozen men.

O'Neill now set everybody to work, men and maids, townmen and soldiers (only those on duty attending the breach and the walls) to draw dung-hills, mortar, stones and timber, and make a long lane a man's height and about eighty yards in length, on both sides up from the breach, with a foot-bank at the back of it. Then he caused engines to be placed on both sides of the lane, and two guns at the end of it (which were hidden from view) opposite to the breach.

And so all things were ready for a storm.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning when the Cromwellites advanced to the storm. They entered without any opposition, and none of O'Neill's men appeared until the Puritans were well inside, and the lane which I have described was full up with horsemen, armed with helmets, backs, breasts, swords, musque-toons and pistols.

When those in front found themselves in a pound, and that they could proceed no further, they cried "Halt! Halt!"

Then those men entering behind them at the breach, thinking that the front men were for running away, cried out "Advance! Advance!" and so you may take it from me that there was a mighty confusion.

Then suddenly I rushed with a party of pikes and musketeers to the breach and cut off and drove back any more entering. Then O'Neill's men in full force fell upon those crowded in the pound with shots, pikes, scythes and stones, and cast long pieces of timber from the engines right into the midst of them.

Also the two guns at the end of the pound fired into them and slaughtered them with chained bullets, so that in less than one hour's time there were about one thousand men killed, and lying on top of one another.

Cromwell was now on horseback at the gate and with his guard for company, expecting the gates to be opened by those who had gone through the breach and were now lying dead in the pound. When he saw what had taken place and heard our cannons going off he was

more vexed than he had ever been since he first put on helmet against the King; for indeed it was seldom that he met with such a repulse as this.

He now ordered the troopers to advance to the assault, and they surely displayed a bravery worthy of their former fame.

Our men were driven for the while from the breach and the enemy made their way to the eastern breastwork opposite to the breach.

Here, however, our men opened fire from the neighbouring houses, a galling cross-fire, and many of their officers and men sank under it.

Determined at all hazards to storm the place Cromwell now poured masses of troops in at the breach, those behind forcing the front ranks on. For some four hours the desperate slaughter continued, the former clansmen of Owen Roe showing the unconquered Puritans that they had met their match at last.

The retreat was at length sounded and the remnant of Cromwell's Ironsides retired leaving the triumphant Hugh O'Neill in possession of the breach.

It was little wonder that I stood there astounded at our victory, and contrasted it with the fight at Drogheda.

I think that not only were our men here the better warriors, but where Sir Arthur Aston had but one stratagem to show, our Hugh would bring out twenty.

After the fight Noll was unable to conceal his admiration, and declared loudly that our men were invincible.

He now determined to call in reserves from the neighbouring garrisons, and by changing the siege into a blockade to carry the place at last.

The Duke of Ormonde, although he had never sent assistance, was delighted at O'Neill's masterly resistance which seemed to show that the fortune of the war was changing; but not long after we sent him word that our ammunition was running fast, and that in truth we could hold out but very little longer. From the time that the siege had begun, far off and near the walls, it was now close upon two months, and death had thinned our ranks and the houses were crowded with the sick and wounded.

On the night that the last of our ammunition was served out O'Neill brought us all together for a council of war, and it was then decided to leave Clonmel secretly and retreat upon Limerick.

O'Neill advised the Mayor to make conditions with Oliver after we had passed out, but to keep our departure a secret.

Two hours later we passed over the river undetected by the guard of horse that lay upon the other extremity of the bridge, and made no halt until we reached Ballynasack, about twelve miles from Clonmel.

Then the Mayor sent out to Cromwell for a conduct to wait upon His Excellency, which was at once sent, and an officer to bring him from the wall to the commander's tent. Then Noll complimented him and made suitable terms for the yielding of the place.

At the conclusion of the business His Excellency asked him if Hugh O'Neill had known of his coming out, whereupon he answered "No," that O'Neill was gone some hours ago with all his men.

Then General Cromwell frowned and stared at him, saying, "You knave, you have served me so, and did not tell me before!"

To which the Mayor replied: "If His Excellency had demanded the question, he would tell him."

Then he asked what that Hugh O'Neill was;

to which the Mayor answered that he was an over-sea soldier born in Spain.

On which Noll answered hotly, "God damn you and your over-sea," and desired the Mayor to give back the signed treaty paper again. To which he answered that he hoped His Excellency would not break his conditions with him, as that was not the reputation which His Excellency had. Then Oliver was calm for a while, but suddenly broke into a fury, crying out, "By God above, he would follow that Hugh O'Neill wheresoever he went." But he kept his conditions with the town.

This was the strongest resistance that he had ever met with, and the grandest fight our men made in that war.

There was never seen a storm of such long continuance and so stoutly defended, neither in England nor Ireland.

CHAPTER XX.

Which tells the story of the lonely road to Connaught, and how sorrow crowded upon sorrow.

AFTER the fall of Clonmel the war lingered on for another two years, and by that time Ireland was well under the heel of the conqueror. Concerning the Cromwellian settlement which followed on the conclusion of the war I have gathered most of my information from those exiles who poured into Spain for the next few years, preferring freedom in a foreign land to slavery within their own.

Plague and famine had followed hard upon the heels of war, and it was calculated that during the last twelve years out of a population of 1,466,000 some 616,000 had perished by the sword, by famine or by plague. Death had been so hard at work that close upon one-third of the population had been wiped out, and the traveller might have ridden for some thirty miles without encountering a single human being.

Wolves, however, he would have met with in hundreds, who, feeding upon human flesh, were rendered doubly savage, and whose numbers had increased so much of late that they could be seen prowling close even to the great cities.

The decree now went forth from England that all the leading Catholics who had borne a part in the late war were to be condemned to death, and to the complete forfeiture of their estates; while all other Catholics who were considered the least guilty by the Parliament of England were to leave the homes of their ancestors at a given date and to take the lonely road to Connaught. Connaught, which was the most desolate and unfruitful of the four provinces, was to be their future home, and to pass again beyond its boundaries was to mean death.

All their rich lands in Ulster, Leinster and Munster now passed into the hands of the English adventurers and the Puritans who had fought in the war.

The small property which I possessed in Galway was confiscated by the Parliament, because I had remained true to the faith of my fathers, and had fought for my Irish land.

My second cousin, Hester Brandon, whose

husband had died fighting for the Catholic Confederation, was banished with her three children into Connaught at ten days' notice, and her rich estate near Dublin was handed over to a Protestant adventurer.

This news was brought to me in the first month of my lonely exile in Spain, and I remember how my heart was filled with a sad pity at the thought of this gentle lady and her little ones being forced over the borders of the Shannon by the cruelty of Cromwell, to dwell for the remainder of their existence amid the wilds of Connaught.

A proclamation was now published stating that any Catholic priest found in Ireland after twenty days was guilty of high treason, and liable to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; while any person harbouring a priest was liable to the penalty of death. Should anyone be aware of the hiding-place of a priest, and not inform the people in authority, he was liable to a public whipping and to be deprived of both his ears.

The law also enacted that anyone who was absent on Sunday from the parish church was liable to a fine of thirty pence.

To carry on the Irish war a large number of

shop-keepers in London had lent money to the Government, and it was necessary to satisfy these people (and also a large number of the common soldiers whose wages had never been paid) with the forfeited estates in Ireland. As they could not all be compensated fully, a lottery was established, and it was a frequent thing for some vulgar and illiterate trooper or shop-keeper to draw the estate of a Catholic nobleman.*

Slave dealers were now let loose across the land and thousands of innocent girls were captured and shipped to the Barbadoes to be sold there as slaves to the planters.

To banish the Irish race to Connaught or to scatter them abroad; to break up their homes and to exterminate them from the other three provinces; to blot out their religion and to substitute the creed of the Reformation; these were the ambitions of the English people.

Of the Irish captains and the men of war,

* So that, in a great many cases, members of the Protestant aristocracy are descended from Cromwellian upstarts, while their tenants are descended from the old Catholic gentry who were ruined by the Cromwellian settlement and degraded by the Penal Laws. It was this knowledge which made the arrogant attitude of the ascendency class towards their Catholic tenants so peculiarly obnoxious.

some 40,000 went into exile and took up arms under the King of Spain.

So Connaught was selected for the habitation of the Irish people on account of its being surrounded by the Shannon for all but ten miles, and this portion could be guarded by forts.

To further secure the imprisonment of the nation and to cut them off from all relief by sea, a belt of land some four miles wide, which commenced one mile to the west of Sligo and so wound along by the coast-line and the Shannon, was reserved for the Puritans to plant.

To Connaught, then, all the Irish were to remove by the 1st of May, 1654, with the exception of Irishwomen married to English Protestants, on condition that they became Protestants. Boys under fourteen and girls under twelve in Protestant service, and to be brought up Protestants, were also excepted; and lastly, all those who had shown during the ten years' war their constant good affection to the Commonwealth in preference to the King.

One can imagine the faces of the steeple-hatted Puritans adding this last farce to the clause.

All the Irish in Connaught were to dwell there without entering a walled town, or coming within five miles of some, on the pain of death. All those who had not removed by the above date were under pain of being put to death by a court of military officers if they were found on the English side of the Shannon.

Connaught was at this time the most wasted province in the kingdom, for Sir Charles Coote, disregarding the truce made with our nation by order of the King, in 1644, had continued to ravage it with fire and sword. So it was to such a place in the winter months that the Irish nation, their nobles, their gentry, and their commons, together with their wives and little children, had to set out.

The Puritan officers were struck with the difficulty of carrying out the orders of the Parliament at such a time, for the gentry and farmers were then engaged in getting in the harvest which they had been encouraged to sow on account of the scarcity in the land. Panic-stricken now at the thought of that winter march to Connaught they had no ambition to go on with the tillage, and this meant that the land would be a wilderness in

the next year as the soldiers would not get possession in time to sow.

The officers communicated their troubles to the Commissioners for Ireland, and these good men being perplexed at this report decided to fast, and enjoined the same on all Christian friends in Ireland, and invited the officers of the army to join them in lifting up prayers with strong crying and tears "to Him to whom nothing is too hard, that His servants, whom He had called forth in this day to act in these great transactions, might be made faithful, and carried on by His own outstretched arm against all opposition and difficulty, to do what was pleasing in His sight."

And in the meantime the transplantation of the unhappy people went on.

Ireland now lay void as a wilderness. Women and children were found daily in the ditches starved and perishing, and the bodies of many wandering orphans, whose fathers had embarked for Spain and whose mothers had died of famine, were preyed upon by famished wolves.

In the years 1652 and 1653 the plague and famine swept away whole counties, but in spite of the wastes they left behind there were still

three things which troubled the comfort of the English.

In the first united Parliament of the Three Kingdoms, at Westminster, in 1657, Major Morgan, member for the County of Wicklow, deprecated the taxation proposed for Ireland by showing that the country was in ruins; and besides the cost of rebuilding the churches, courthouses and market-houses, they were under a very heavy charge for public rewards, paid for the destruction of three beasts.

"We have three beasts to destroy (said Major Morgan) that lay burthens on us. The first is the wolf, on whom we lay five pounds a head. The second beast is a priest, on whose head we lay ten pounds—if he be eminent, more. The third beast is a Tory, on whose head, if he be a public Tory, we lay twenty pounds; and forty shillings on a private Tory."

These Tories were Catholic gentlemen who had been hunted from their estates and who led a roving life in the wilds after the Irish armies they belonged to had been disbanded.

The poor Irish peasantry, with a generosity characteristic of their race and country, never refused them hospitality, but maintained them

as gentlemen, allowing them to cosher upon them, as the Irish called the giving of their lord a certain number of days' board and lodging.

The English adventurers who had robbed the Tories of their estates complained much of their pride and idleness in not becoming *their* labourers. But the sense of injustice and their use of arms prevented it.

Their sons or nephews, brought up in poverty and matched with peasant girls, will become the tenants of the English officers and soldiers; and thence, reduced to labourers, will be found the turf-cutters and potato-diggers of the next generation—yet keeping, even in the low social rank they have fallen to, their ancient spirit and courage, and their intolerance of injury and insult.

This is the story of the lonely road to Connaught; this is the curse which Cromwell left behind him.

And now some concluding words about the fate of Galway city, which was the last fortress which had yielded to the Cromwellian armies on the 20th of March, 1652.

On the 23rd of July, 1655, all the Irish were ordered to quit the town by the 1st of November

following, and if they refused the soldiers were ordered to hunt them out.

On the 30th of October this order was executed, and all the inhabitants were banished to make way for the English Protestants whom the State decided to install.

In order to induce the best class of Planters to settle there the many advantages of the town were pointed out.

It lay open for trade with Spain, the Straits, and the West Indies, and had many noble uniform buildings of marble; while no Irish would be permitted to dwell in the city nor within three miles of it.

There never was a better chance of undertaking a plantation, and it was suggested that in time it might become another Derry.

But it is one thing to destroy the trade of a city and another to build it up again; and Galway, once frequented with the ships of France and Spain bearing choice wines and other commodities to supply the wants of the O'Neills and O'Donnells, the O'Garas and O'Kanes, her marble palaces the property of strangers, her gallant sons and dark-eyed daughters banished, remains to-day a splendid ruin. Her ports are

empty, for her trade is gone, while her hungry and deserted air becomes the mock of the insulting stranger.

And all this was the work of England.

Of England, that old tyrant, who makes her treaties with the whole wide world, but breaks her faith only with the weaker nations. Who during those ten years of war marched with her Bible in one hand and her sword within the other, strewing her texts around her while she burnt and killed—beating her own record as a land of robbers and of hypocrites.

Pass it down the generations, this story of a nation's woes.

CHAPTER XXI.

How I slew a murderer by Dardistown Castle, and how I saw a vision of Shiela Brandon.

MY narrative is now rapidly drawing to a close. After the siege of Clonmel I parted from Hugh O'Neill for the time being, and travelling north to Julianstown I set out from that place and scoured the country round to try and capture any information concerning Shiela Brandon.

I remember it was the third day after my arrival, and I had been wandering over the country for many hours finding all enquiries fruitless, when suddenly I found that evening the news long sought for.

I was returning by Dardistown and had passed by the Nanny water soon after the dusk had fallen, the moon slowly climbing the heavens and lighting up the country round with her pale sad light.

As I entered a glade not far from the Castle

my attention was rivetted on a curious horseman who was riding slowly towards me.

He was dressed like a mixture of preacher and soldier, wearing a cloak and high-crowned steeple-hat, together with a long sword and pistols.

"Greeting, friend," he said, on coming near me; "a goodly night to travel on when we have so fair a lamp to guide our footsteps," and he waved his hand towards the sky.

"A fair night, indeed," I answered, and broke off his praises of the moon with the question if he had been at the taking of Drogheda, for my first thought was always to question anyone who had been present.

He grew excited at the name of Drogheda, and broke into extraordinary speech.

"Drogheda," he cried, "Drogheda, where we slew the unbelievers and divided the spoil according to the Lord's commands and the wish of General Cromwell. Oh, Oliver, blessed art thou on account of thy honour; never has defeat come near thee, nor disaster attended on thy banner. Ride on, great soldier, chosen of the Lord; gird up thy loins with resolution and be steadfast to the mark of thy high calling."

"Which means," said I, "that he is to sack another Drogheda, cut down surrendered men, and murder helpless women."

"Nay, nay, it be no murder," said the stranger sternly, "if the Lord cries upon us for the sacrifice. I myself slew one fair damsel, being moved thereto by the Spirit of God."

He paused for a moment and then continued: "It was down by the wall near the river that I came upon Captain Thomas à Wood and found a lovely maiden on her knees before him and making many prayers that he would spare her life; and on his asking her name she cried out that it was Mistress Shiela Brandon. As I approached he seemed moved with a profound pity to save her, and would doubtless have made the attempt only I foiled his weakness. For being moved by the spirit to carry out the General's orders to slay and spare not, I passed my sword through the virgin's bosom, and then before she had finished gasping I flung her into the river, which was red near the banks with the blood of those whom the Lord had slain."

After he had spoken my darling's name I seemed rooted to the ground in a kind of horror and could neither speak nor move for some

moments. Then my strength returned to me, and I drew out my sword and struck him across the cheek with the flat of it, crying out "murderer," and again "murderer."

He sprang back into the shade of the trees.

"Why this treatment, friend, and who art thou to strike a soldier of the Commonwealth without cause? Art thou one of those murderous Irish Papists who shed the innocent blood in '41, or art thou one of our own God-damn-me cavaliers?" Then he drew his sword, and I stepped back into the open space to wait for his onslaught.

The moon shone fair and clear into the open space, and behind me I caught a glimpse of the turrets of Dardistown Castle rising high above the trees, while below us lay the silver waters of the Nanny river glancing and sparkling in the moonbeams.

That he was a master at fencing I have little doubt, for though he must have been stung at the insult of my blow he attacked with great coolness and skill. The blades rang out again and again in the silent night air and he had wounded me badly in many places and my sword arm was bleeding freely, when suddenly a queer

thing happened. Though I knew that my strength was giving way and that the end would not be far off when he would get in the final thrust, I suddenly felt that his attack, too, was weakening and growing wild. A sensation fell upon me also that someone was watching near me, and this was now confirmed by the way my foeman kept staring behind me and with a hidden horror in his eyes, while all the time he fought on mechanically and his attack slowly slackened. He suddenly feinted with his sword and made a great lunge at me which had proved nearly fatal but that I caught it on my hilt and turned the point. This left his breast unguarded and I took the great chance, passing my sword clean through him as far as half the blade. He threw up both arms with a cry and fell slowly backwards, sliding off my sword point and lying groaning on the ground. A little fountain of blood spurted up out of his breast and stained the green grass round him, and then his moaning ceased. I turned now and looked behind me.

Between two trees in the shadow of the moonlight I saw Shiela Brandon standing clear and fair against the dark background. Her

sweet face with the old calm smile as I had known it in life, the same coloured dress which she had worn during her last visit to Drogheda, and her two hands clasped across her breast. I stepped across the open space, holding out my hands and crying out her name, and as I did so the vision vanished into the glimmering air.

I returned slowly to where the dead man was lying with his sword beside him and the great staring eyes looking up into the starlit sky.

Then the terrible horror of Shiela's death fell full upon me and I knelt there beside the body and burst into a passion of bitter tears.

For my darling to have died like that. To have been swallowed up in those blood-stained waters in an unknown grave, where how many more were sleeping? Not even for me to have had the poor consolation of some little country churchyard—to have carved a cross or have raised a stone to the one loved name.

CHAPTER XXII.

Which tells how Father Latham and I set out for Spain, and how we saw the sun rise for the last time over Galway Bay.

TWO years passed slowly by, two years in which by constant action I tried to forget that awful sorrow of my life.

I followed the fallen fortunes of Hugh O'Neill, and Father Latham and I fought side by side at the siege of Limerick town, where with the aid of Owen's gallant yeomen we checked the fierce attacks of the Cromwellian armies.

We had kept together after Cromwell had left Ireland, and Ireton was pursuing with a relentless fury the task which his accursed master had left unfinished; and it was not until the fall of Galway put the last touch to our lost cause that we decided to set out for Spain.

Under cover of a dark night we boarded a merchant ship that was sailing for Cadiz, and

which was waiting for us by an arrangement with the captain outside the point of Spiddal.

It was an hour before daybreak when we set out in a small fishing boat rowed by two Claddaugh men, and we had scarcely been five minutes on board when the anchor was weighed and the white sails were unfurled to catch the cool westerly breeze.

Ah, how long that night appeared as we stood together by the bow and watched the white foam falling from the cut-water, and saw the white track far behind us fading in the night.

Father Latham was the first to break the silence by repeating in a low tone some verses of my father's learned by heart how many years ago, and appropriate indeed they seemed to me in that sad hour.

"*How long, my love, how long!*
Till Wrong shall yield to Right,
And dawning Liberty dispel
The darkness of your night?
What have I left to live for now,
But mourn your bitter wrong?
So let me pass—the last of all
To join the martyred throng.

Your night of woe shall surely bring
That dawn of sweet desire,
When Freedom sweeps across the land
In waves of living fire!
My silent dust shall thrill to hear
That resurrection song
Burst from the grave of buried hopes—
How long, my love, how long!"

He stopped, and after a few minutes spoke again half to himself:—"I have loved her, too," he said, "this old unconquered land, and would have gladly died if needs be for her sake, and yet how hopeless all would seem to-day. I have seen the red blood flowing like water down the streets of Drogheda, and have heard the martyr's cry. I have watched the night shadows fall on mangled corpses that in the morning sunlight were strong heroic men. I have seen the murderers stalk across the land and leave behind them where their footsteps fell a blackened wilderness—and yet my trust is strong."

I stopped him gently—

"Father," I said, "for me all faith is dead. Before me lies the land of Spain; behind me

Ireland and a hopeless cause—and all I loved on earth."

Suddenly he raised his hand and pointed towards the east, and I saw the old fire flashing from the deep dark eyes.

"The dawn," he cried, "the dawn. You say you have no faith, look there! After the long night and the weary watching God's light on everything at last!"

I drew myself up and shook off the drowsiness which had crept upon me, and looked towards the breaking day.

Away to the left I saw the faint outlines of Galway city, and one or two pillars of smoke curling slowly upwards towards the sky.

To the east, where the light was brightest, I could see far across the expanse of ocean the outlines of the coast near Oranmore—where Shiela used to live; while to the extreme right, and tipped by the cold new dawn, lay the misty hills of Clare.

The light increased slowly and soon a crimson sunrise turned everything to gold.

I was gazing mournfully towards the coast and wrapped up in the beauty of the scene

before me, when Father Latham touched me gently on the shoulder.

"Have courage, be of great cheer," he said, "the cause *shall* triumph at the last," and he pointed towards the hills. "Could God forget a land like that, or mar so sweet a heritage!"

THE END.

APPENDIX.

Those readers who may desire to study this important period of Irish history and the Cromwellian Settlement which followed, should consult the list of authorities given below.

A thorough knowledge of this period is essential for all those who are anxious to understand the developments of later Irish history.

Gilbert's (edition of)	*The Aphorismal Discovery.*
W. E. H. Lecky's	*History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century.* (Vol. I.)
Prendergast's	*Cromwellian Settlement.*
Denis Murphy's	*Cromwell in Ireland.*
Martin Haverty's	*History of Ireland.**
D'Arcy M'Gee's	*History of Ireland.*
A. M. Sullivan's	*Story of Ireland.*
Walpole's	*The Kingdom of Ireland.*
Green's	*Short History of the English People.*
Carlyle's	*Life and Letters of Oliver Cromwell.*
D'Alton's	*History of Drogheda.*
Carte's	*Collection, &c.*, and *Life of Ormonde.*
Taylor's	*Owen Roe O'Neill.*
M'Donnell's	*Ulster Civil War of* 1641.
Froude's	*English in Ireland.*

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"The author has produced a story of absorbing interest. . . . The book is valuable, combining, as it does, a most pleasing narrative, with a complete historical record of the Great Rebellion."—*Enniscorthy News.*

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